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ITS COURT AND LITERARY SALONS

BY

CATHERINE CHARLOTTE, LADY JACKSON

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IN REMEMBRANCE OF A PLEASANT RENCONTRE,

SOME YEARS AGO, IN THE GAY

CITY OF PARIS.

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"L'esprit de société est le partage naturel des Français; c'est un mérite et un plaisir dont les autres peuples ont senti le besoin "

"C'est à la littérature qu'on doit l'éloignement des débauches grossières et la conservation d'un reste de la politesse. Cette littérature, utile dans toutes les conditions de la vie, console même des calamités publiques, en arrêtant sur des objets agréables l'esprit qui serait trop accablé de la contemplation des misères humaines."

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OLD PARIS:

ITS COURT AND LITERARY SALONS.



INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

THE seventeenth century, in its literary and social aspects, is regarded by French writers generally as the most brilliant period in the history of their nation. It has been termed "the epoch of the true greatness of France," "the true *Renaissance* of literature and *les beaux arts*."

It is indeed a period of very varied and romantic interest. Woman played an important part in it—contributing largely towards the reform then achieved in the French language, and in the corrupt and gross manners of the age, and introducing into the social relations of life that peculiar grace, fascinating ease, vivacity, and undefinable charm still vainly sought for in society out of France.

"*La vie de salon*," says M. Taine, "*n'est parfaite qu'en France*." And it is true. The social *réunions* of other nations have generally been formed on that model, and a more or less "frenchified" tone has been imported into them; yet the peculiar zest of that subtle, incommunicable essence of the brain, *l'esprit de société*, remains still, incontestably, the especial gift of the French. It is a part of the genius

of the nation, and the language partakes of it ; none other expressing with equal facility and felicity all that is lively, complimentary, witty, graceful, tender, refined.

From the time of Louis XII.—himself a liberal patron of learning, and in whose reign Greek was first taught in the schools of France—there had been occasional gleams of the approaching dawn of a fuller intellectual life. They were, however, but partial and fitful.

The young queen, Anne of Brittany, lively and *spirituelle*, learned, and accomplished for the age in which she lived, was the first royal consort of France who bestowed any appreciative patronage on literature, or sought to draw the wives and daughters of the nobles of the land from the seclusion and monotony of the *vie de château*, and to gather a social circle around her.

Those noble dames and damsels were willing enough, when it chanced that their feudal lords and masters consented, to lay aside their spinning-wheels and tapestry-frames at the bidding of their queen ; and though very few, probably, could read either Latin or Greek with her, yet their presence enlivened the old Palais des Tournelles and the Château d'Amboise, and gave to the royal pastimes new spirit and variety. For this Bretonne Queen of France held a separate court, more splendid than the king's, and was attended by a more numerous retinue of courtiers, pages of honor, Breton guards, etc. She was reigning Duchess of Brittany, and, as such, exacted her full meed of homage, which Louis readily accorded her, being rather proud of "*sa Bretonne*," as he was accustomed to call this learned and rather

self-willed royal lady. Jean Marot, the father of Clément, was attached to the court in the quality of her poet, and with the high-sounding title of "*Poète de la magnifique reine, Anne de Bretagne.*" *

Long years of Italian warfare, though most disastrous to France, enriched the royal library with valuable MSS., and the palaces with many treasures of art, the spoil of the wars ; and Francis I. and some few of his nobles imbibed in Italy a taste for the *chefs-d'œuvre* of sculpture, painting, and architecture. Several of its most renowned artists were prevailed on to visit the French court, but none could be tempted to stay there ; though so great, we are told, was the veneration of Francis for learning and the arts, that when any distinguished *savants*, sculptors, or painters were presented to him, "he graciously made a point of advancing three steps to greet them."

But the Italian wars depopulated France ; the heavy burdens laid on the people to exact the sums necessary for carrying them on impoverished it also. The lands lay untilled, the necessaries of life were scarcely obtainable, distress in the provinces was great and general. The uncleanly state of the then walled and comparatively small city of Paris caused frequent outbursts of fever, plague, and small-pox, which considerably thinned the population. The people were grossly ignorant, superstitious, and rough-mannered ; and the court had degenerated since the days of the beneficent Louis XII. and his learned and virtuous queen—it was without refine-

* The splendidly illuminated *livre d'heures* of Anne of Brittany, preserved amongst the treasures of the Louvre, is a work of exquisite beauty and of the highest style of art.

ment ; vice reigned there supreme. Immorality and obscenity, which passed current for wit and humor, were the chief characteristics of the writers then in vogue. The ladies of a literary bent composed "*dévises d'amour*," as posies for rings and other jewels, or, when ambitious of higher flights, wrote licentious verses and tales, after the manner of those of Margu rite de Valois, the king's sister.*

Though Francis encouraged Italian artists, favored *les belles lettres*, founded the College of France, began the rebuilding of the Louvre, and has left a name intimately associated with *souvenirs* of Fontainebleau, his reign was but a series of calamities, unfavorable to intellectual development and the amelioration of the condition of the people. He had devised measures for the increase of commerce and the improvement of the navigation of the Seine ; but his wretched state of health, the religious dissensions, domestic disturbances, foreign foes, and impoverished exchequer prevented their realization.

Henry II. formed similar schemes ; but his death, in 1559, from being wounded, accidentally, at a tournament, put an end to them. He had ordered the

* The lines attributed to the young widow of Francis II.—Mary, Queen of Scotland—when leaving France, are pretty :

" Adieu, plaisant pays de France,
O ma patrie,
La plus ch rie,
Qui a nourri ma jeune enfance !
Adieu France, adieu mes beaux jours !
La nef qui d joint mes amours,
N'aura de moi que la moiti  ;
Une part te reste, elle est tienne,
Je la fie   ton amiti 
Pour que de l'autre il te souviene."

demolition of that unhealthy royal residence, the old Palais des Tournelles, and soon after his decease its walls were thrown down, and its pestiferous moats filled up. This fruitful cause of disease and death being removed from the too often plague-stricken city, the building of the palace of the Tuileries was begun in 1564. These and other works progressed but slowly amidst the crimes and bloodshed that were the principal events of the regency and reigns of Catherine de Médicis and her sons.

Charles IX., whose preceptor was Amyot, the translator of Plutarch, had an inclination for *les belles lettres*, and when prevented by weather from following his usual open air sports would send for the poets to amuse him, and especially the poet *par excellence*—"le prince des poètes,"—the licentious, vain and intriguing Pierre de Ronsard. Charles even wrote a couplet himself now and then. But the influence of the queen-mother was fatal to her sons. Her crafty, bloodthirsty nature acted as a blight—destroying every germ of good that appeared in them.

After the assassination of Henry III. the Leaguers, either bribed or worn by their sufferings during the siege into submission, opened the gates of Paris to Henry IV.; persecution then ceased, and after near forty years of civil warfare both Catholic and Huguenot were free to breathe in peace—peace which the king believed he had permanently secured to the latter when he signed the edict of Nantes. A rough, but gay, gallant soldier, the greater part of whose life had been spent in the camp, and who when not making war was with the same persistent zeal making love, Henry was no great promoter of learning or liberal patron of the arts. He, however, very sensi-

bly sent the royal library to Paris, as likely to be more useful in the capital than at the hunting-seat of Fontainebleau, whither Francis I. had transferred it from Blois, where Louis XII. had placed it at the suggestion of Anne of Brittany, since whose time it had been very greatly increased. Henry's especial taste was for building and repairing, and but for the restraining hand of Sully he, probably, would further have extended his works at St. Germain, Paris and Fontainebleau. He added a wing to the Tuileries, built the Pavillon de Flore, made some progress towards connecting the Palace with the Louvre, and carried out several improvements in Paris. He employed the poet, Malherbe, to write amatory verses and to extol the beauty of his mistresses. He could dash off pleasant stanzas himself, and very flattering *billets doux*, when inspired by the charms of the reigning *belle* of his too susceptible heart

The example he set in his own mode of life was little calculated to reform the morals and manners of a dissolute court. But his tolerant spirit, his gay good-humor and apparent frank *bonhomie* in his relations towards his people, contrasted so favorably with the grinding tyranny to which, as if mere beasts of burden, they had been subjected by former rulers or oppressors of France, that they fully atoned in their eyes for all his excesses and shortcomings, which were indeed of a nature—such was the extreme grossness of the age—then generally deemed venial. His reign, though memorable in itself, was but as the first greyness of dawn to the flush of the opening day, the misty forerunner of an age of intellectual brilliancy and social refinement—" *le grand siècle littéraire*," which attained its climax towards the middle of the seventeenth century.

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CHAPTER II.

The 14th of May, 1610.—Coronation of Marie de Médicis.—Royal Procession at Saint Denis.—Coronation Fête.—Floral Decoration of Old Paris.—The Bourgeois King.—Popularity of Henry IV.—Henry in his Fifty-seventh Year.—Angélique Paulet.—The King's Coach.—Assassination of Henry IV.—Intense Grief of the People.—A Royal Widow's Weeds.—The Child-king, Louis XIII.—The Queen-regent's Favorite.

It was the 14th of May, 1610. Workmen to the number of eight hundred, or more, were employed in decorating the old city of Paris for a grand state pageant, arranged to take place on the 16th. Marie de Médicis, the second wife of Henry IV., was then to make her public entry into the capital, as the newly-crowned Queen of France. Her coronation, so long earnestly desired, so long delayed, she had prevailed on the king, after ten years of scolding and coaxing, threatening and entreating, to consent to. The cherished wish of her heart was obtained, and she had been crowned with the utmost pomp and solemnity, on the previous day, at St. Denis, by Cardinal Joyeuse.

Little or no sympathy or affection existed between Marie de Médicis and her husband. His mistresses—less by their beauty than by gaiety and good-humor—held an influence over him which probably she herself might have acquired, could she have curbed her violent temper. But not only did she rave, and rage, and assail him with angry words, it was even sometimes necessary to restrain her from the

too free use of her hands. And her blows were far from being light ones, for, as Henry once jestingly said, she was "terribly robust." From time to time whispers had reached her of the king's intention to seek a divorce, on the ground that a promise of marriage given in years gone by to the Marquise de Verneuil, invalidated any subsequent union contracted by him. Henry had not a very scrupulous conscience, but these whispered reports originated solely with the intriguing marquise. He entertained, at least, a kindly feeling towards Marie, notwithstanding her attacks upon him, and publicly paid her the respect due to the mother of the Dauphin of France.

But her brow had cleared since it had been graced by a crown. She was radiant with delight ; for she had achieved a real triumph—one especially gratifying to the feelings of a woman of her violent and vindictive character—the Marquise de Verneuil, the king's mistress, and the Princesse Margu  rite de France, his divorced wife, having both been compelled to witness that triumph and even to enhance it, by joining the train of ladies appointed by Henry to form her *cort  ge*. Her dark Italian eyes, which so often flashed with angry indignation on her faithless spouse, were then lighted up with a gleam of proud satisfaction that but few had observed in them before—Henry, never.

The king had taken no part in the ceremony ; he was present merely as a spectator. But when the royal procession passed up the nave of the old cathedral, preceded by archbishops and bishops in their richest vestments ; the queen, surrounded by the noblest and fairest ladies of her court, and arrayed in splendid robes and sparkling gems, that well be-

came her florid complexion and portly figure (she was in her thirty-seventh year), and wearing with dignity the royal mantle—which, heavily embroidered in fleurs-de-lis of gold and pearls, was borne by pages of honor—Henry, turning towards his minister and friend, De Sully, exclaimed in an animated tone : “ *Ventre Saint Gris !—Qu’elle est belle !* ”

This transitory revelation of beauty, due to the gratified feeling of the moment and the pomp and circumstance of royalty that surrounded her, took the king by surprise.

“ I could throw myself at her feet,” he continued—after he had gazed long and steadfastly at her, and had replied to the proud glance she cast on him by a more amorous one than he had ever bestowed on her before—“ and worship her as a mistress, if I had not the misfortune to have her for a wife.”

Henry was at that time preparing for war, and Marie, under the guidance of Sully, was to be regent in his absence. This was chiefly his reason for consenting to her coronation, and for the proposed great *éclat* to be given to her entry into Paris.

The narrow streets of the old city were more than usually thronged on that bright May morning. The Parisians were then, as now, a pleasure-loving people, and while many were busy with the preparations for the *fête*, many more were amusing themselves by looking on. Public *fêtes*, attended by any great pomp and parade of which the state defrayed the expense, were not numerous in Henry’s reign. For the prudent Duc de Sully, who held the state’s purse-strings, regarded all lavish expenditure of that kind as throwing money into the streets, and in one sense so it literally was. But on this occasion, the enthu-

siastic people supplied a bountiful tribute of floral decorations to mingle with and to add freshness and beauty to the tapestry and gold of the state and the banners and emblems of the various religious communities.

The fine *façades* of the new houses in the noble Place Royale and the Place Dauphine, then scarcely completed—though fashion had already sealed the former for her favorite abode, and both of which still remain the most interesting of the few *souvenirs* of the days of Henry IV. that modern Paris affords—were garlanded and festooned as if for a *fête* to the goddess of Spring. It was the season of flowers ; and flowers and fruit, as an old writer tells us,* then grew in such abundance in the surrounding fields and gardens and orchards, that “ they were to be had almost for nothing.” In fact, from the Tour de Nesle, where the Institute now stands, to the Porte St. Victor ; from the Place de Carrousel to the Porte St. Antoine ; from the Porte du Temple to the Porte Marceau—the then extreme limits of Paris, north and south of the Seine—the manifold defects and desights of the old city were covered with a flower-gemmed mantle.

The object of all this enthusiasm was the king rather than the queen. The people delighted to honor him. They looked upon him almost as one of themselves ; as a *bourgeois* king. The vicissitudes of his career had, indeed, often brought him into close companionship with many of the hardships and privations of humble life, and he was *rusté* enough to be able to turn this experience to good account. But at no time was there anything of the *bourgeois* in Henry IV. He had been a hardy, dashing leader of

* Sauval.

troops ; gay and roistering, and without much dignity. When he unbuckled his sword, he cast aside for the time being all distinctions of rank, and sat down to be jovial and to enjoy himself with his comrades after the rough manner of the camp. But he was greatly changed since the days of "La belle Gabrielle." He had said that his heart had died with her, and that he could love no more. And perhaps it was true that he had never loved woman as he had loved her, though he had been more reckless and dissolute since her death, and to the crowning folly of his life was about to add its crowning scandal by entering upon a war that might desolate Europe for the sake of another Helen—the young Princess de Condé, the wife of his nephew.

Yet no king of France, not even "*le père de son peuple*," the far more deserving Louis XII., had ever been so popular as Henry IV. His disposition was humane ; he was cruel only where the preservation of game was in question ; for that purpose his decrees were barbarous, for the chase was a passion with him when the excitement of war was wanting. Still, with all his popularity, faction was rife in the country and had never been wholly suppressed. Even then, as now, semi-barbarous as the people were, compared with their present intellectuality and general intelligence, they could never long endure peaceably and voluntarily the yoke of *any* ruler. And this effervescent spirit the feudal nobles, to a certain extent, encouraged, each being intent on maintaining his own independence.

This ever-present source of anxiety, together with other cares of state, domestic infelicity, and the irregularities of his life, had told greatly upon Henry,

both physically and mentally, during the last few years. The gallant bearing, the sprightly jests that once distinguished "the ugliest, but bravest gentleman in France," were things of the past. Now, in his fifty-seventh year, his deeply-wrinkled face had become meagre and long ; a careworn expression was almost habitual to it, and the once lively eye was sunken and lustreless. His shoulders were bowed, as with the heavy weight of years ; his hair, once black and wavy, hung lank round his face, and, like his Huguenot beard, was bleached as with the snows of a wintry old age. His whole appearance was as of one who had been buffeted by the storms of life for the full span of the allotted threescore years and ten.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the king was then laying siege to the heart of Mademoiselle Angélique Paulet. And as he was always better pleased, rough soldier though he was, "by a conquest in love than a conquest in war, and from the universal homage he paid to woman still succeeded in pleasing the fair sex generally," it is probable that, had he lived, the new flame might have abated the ardor of the preceding one, and the meditated war have been abandoned.

On the morning of the 14th of May, Henry had visited the beautiful Angélique Paulet. She was the daughter of the state secretary who originated the tax, named after him, "La Paulette." The king, "*pour motiver sa visite*," had with him his eldest son, the young duc, César de Vendôme, to introduce him to this fascinating young lady. She has been described as receiving her royal visitors "seated on a sofa of scarlet brocatelle, and wearing a morning-

dress of blue silk. Part of her hair, which was of a deep golden color, was twisted with a string of pearls and a blue riband, and part fell in long curls on her shoulders. The dress was made high, but open at the throat, displaying a necklace of diamonds set in gold, with a border of black enamel. Her sleeves were looped back with blue ribands, and her bracelets were of the same pattern as the necklace." This fair damsel, who was but seventeen, had won the admiration of the king by her graceful dancing and exquisite singing, in a "*ballet de la reine*," danced by the court at the Louvre. Mademoiselle Angélique Paulet some years after was one of the celebrities of the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

Later in the day the king had a fancy to see how the preparations for the 16th were progressing. He was accompanied in his coach by the Duc d'Epernon, and three or four other nobles. It was seldom he used a coach, owing, it has been said, to a superstitious presentiment of evil likely to befall him in one. But it seems scarcely necessary to assign superstition as his objection to using a coach, when we remember what sort of vehicles the Paris coach-builders then produced. They were small open rooms (no glass windows),* either set without springs on a frame with four immensely large wheels, or suspended to long spokes by broad leathern bands. Thus, with a fair prospect of dislocation to the limbs of the occupant, these unwieldy constructions went jolting or swinging over the ups and downs formed by the mounds of dirt that impeded their progress

* Glass windows were not used until the time of Louis XIV., who sent a coach so furnished to England, as a present to Charles II.

in the wretchedly paved and unpaved streets of the old city. And it required dexterous handling on the part of the driver to guide the four or six horses attached to these cumbrous conveyances, so as to avoid collisions in the narrow and tortuous thoroughfares. But, luckily, coaches were not yet numerous, and only the very rich could afford to take an airing in that stately and comfortless fashion.*

It was an unexpected obstruction by carts, that afforded Ravallac the opportunity of taking the king's life. Preparations for the *fête* had occasioned the employment of an unusual number of carts, and the royal equipage was brought to a standstill by two of them on that spot in the Rue St. Honoré (known to most persons who have visited Paris) which then formed the corner of the narrow Rue de la Ferronnerie. There, during the momentary confusion that ensued, the vile purpose of the assassin was but too fatally accomplished. He mounted the projecting steps of the coach, leaned far into it, and twice, with a dagger, furiously attacked the king; the second time piercing his heart.

Henry fell dead into the arms of the Duc d'Epernon. It was endeavored temporarily to persuade the populace that the king, though wounded, was not dead—but in vain; the fact of his assassination and the capture of the assassin spread rapidly through the city.

* Sauval (*Antiquités de Paris*) says that he had been told by a certain ancient dame—Madame Pilon—that there were no coaches in Paris until after the time of the League, some sixteen years before Henry's death, and that the first person to appear in one was a relative of her own, the daughter of an apothecary of the Rue St. Antoine, who had inherited a large fortune, and who was ambitious of distinguishing herself as a woman of fashion.

The chancellor, sitting in his apartment in the Louvre, hearing a great commotion amongst the soldiers on duty, called to the officer on guard :

" Capitaine, qu'est-ce donc que ce fracas d'armes et de soldats de garde ? "

" Monseigneur, " replied the officer, in a tone of the deepest emotion, *" c'est que le roi est mort ! "*

*" Mort ! Ah ! savez-vous ce que vous dites là ! Et le chancelier lui pressa les mains, le regardant d'un air d'inquiète menace. " **

A wail of mad despair ran through the land—grief so intense that it became rage in its hopelessness. Yet, when the tragic death of the king was made known to the queen, she heard the sad news with exceeding calmness ; though it had been revealed to her with fear, lest it should afflict her too deeply.

" Elle ne parut, " says Hénault, *" ni assez surprise ni assez affligée. "*

She seemed even elated with the thought that great power had fallen into her hands.

Sully and other friends of Henry IV. became suspicious of the queen, of the Duc d'Epéron, of Monsieur le Prince, and ventured to inquire of each other whether they who were to profit by this crime were not in fact its authors ?

Henry was assassinated at about four in the afternoon. By six, the queen and the Duc d'Epéron had taken all the necessary steps to secure the decree of the parliament declaring her regent. The ceremony of the previous day, by an extraordinary coincidence, had given her the right to claim it. On the 15th she appeared in the flowing black robes of a royal widow (as first worn in France by Anne of

* Vie MS. de Louis XIII.

Brittany), with a veil of gauze taffetas reaching to her feet, and a full-plaited ruche of white gauze encircling her throat, the ends fastening in front like a scarf, with bows of black riband. Long Venetian sleeves, looped back, displayed the beauty of her arms, while the freshness of her complexion was becomingly subdued by the white ruche and the flowing gauze drapery of her veil.

Thus attired she proceeded to Les Augustines, where the parliament, on account of the expected *fête*, had assembled. She led by the hand the little king, Louis XIII., then eight years and a half old. He wore a violet velvet dress and a plumed hat of the same color ; thus giving much effect to the sombre but graceful robes of his mother. Her appearance made a great impression on the assembly, and it was generally acknowledged that she had never, even at her coronation, appeared to greater advantage. While speaking of the assassination of the king she excited sympathy by the abundance of her tears ; and she is said to have been a woman of such violent emotions that the vehemence of her weeping was something startling.

The regency was conferred on her with full and absolute powers, also the guardianship of the young king, who, at her request, was required to give his *vivâ voce* approval in confirmation of the decree of the parliament.

The tragic manner of the death of Henry IV. had deeply impressed the child-king. This impression was deepened by the energetic words of his mother on this occasion, and the indignation and horror, the grief and resentment evinced by the parliament when referring to the wretched Ravillac and his infamous

deed. A dread of being assassinated took possession of the mind of the youthful Louis, and remained with him through life, rendering him suspicious and unjust, and often strangely affecting his conduct.

With the regency of Marie de Médicis began an entirely new order of things, both social and political. Italian favorites were in the ascendant. Concini, transformed into a Frenchman, as Le Maréchal d'Ancre, succeeded, without either experience or capability, to the important posts held for so many years by the Duc de Sully ; and the millions of *livres* that prudent minister had amassed for the exigencies of the state passed into the prodigal hands of the queen-regent.

CHAPTER III.

Paris at the time of Henry IV.'s Death.—The Hôtel Saint Paul.—The New Louvre.—The Hôtel de Soissons.—Henry III.'s Vow.—Huguenot and Catholic.—Enlargement of the Tuileries.—L'Hôtel de Ville.—Le Pont Neuf.—La Samaritaine.—A Capucine Convent.—Saint Vincent de Paul.

PARIS at the time of Henry IV.'s death did not extend beyond the limits within which Charles V. had fortified it, about the middle of the fourteenth century, after having recovered the greater part of the dominions taken from his father, King John, by Edward III. and the Black Prince. Those fortifications crossed the present Place de Carrousel, enclosing the old Louvre, built by Philippe Auguste as a royal residence in the early part of the thirteenth century. The Louvre was a feudal castle—the royal donjon-keep. It stood, until the time of Charles V., outside the city walls. Its deep moats were supplied from the Seine, and it was provided with every means that the military art of the day made needful for resistance and defence. Sauval gives full details of these repairs, additions, and embellishments of Charles V., by which the extent, the interest and importance of the Louvre appear to have been much increased.

John of France possessed a library of twenty volumes ; his son increased it to nine hundred, placed it in "*La Tour de la Librairie*," and thus became the founder of the Bibliothèque Royale de France.

But while the old fortress of Philippe Auguste was

undergoing repair, a less dreary abode was in course of construction for Charles. It was the Hôtel St. Paul, a perfect *maison de plaisance*. Its site is indicated by the present Rue and Quai St. Paul and Quai St. Martin. It had neither moat, battlement, nor arquebuse to defend it; the near neighborhood of the Bastille being thought sufficient protection. The *grande salle* was a splendid apartment, with a finely-carved ceiling and painted walls. There were chapels and galleries, with painted glass windows, and numerous spacious apartments. On three sides extensive gardens and grounds surrounded it. They were planted with trees and shrubs, forming thickets and groves, with clumps of fruit-trees and patches of vegetables; park, orchard, kitchen and flower garden combined. There were dove-cots, fowl-houses, and fish-ponds; two fountains and a menagerie, and a pleasant green slope that led down to the river. Above all, there was a spacious court where tournaments and other sports took place.

Another royal dwelling, the Palais des Tournelles, turreted and fortified, became, after Charles V.'s death, the favorite abode of royalty. The Hôtel St. Paul fell to ruin; its gardens lay waste, and were afterwards built upon—such names as Rue de la Cerisaie, Beautreillis, Petit Parc, etc., being still existing traces of the ground they occupied. The old Louvre having suffered greatly in the wars with the English, its demolition was ordered by Francis I., who laid the first stone of the present magnificent edifice.

The new Louvre that was to occupy the site of the frowning old fortress was intended, as originally planned by Francis I., for a then modern and com-

modious royal dwelling. The works were but little advanced when Francis died, but they progressed so rapidly under Henry II. that his widow, Catherine de Médicis, on assuming the regency, left the unhealthy and already condemned Palais des Tournelles, and established her court at the Louvre. Its advancement was slow during the strife and bloodshed of the Médicis period ; and besides, Catherine had determined on building a new palace contiguous to the Louvre, but outside the fortifications, on the vacant ground long used as *tuileries*, or brickfields. The architects she employed were Jean Bullant and Philibert Delorme, whose extensive design was carried out only as far as the *façade*. For during the erection of the Palace of the Tuileries, Catherine gave up the intention of residing there, and employed Bullant to build her another residence, which was afterwards known as L'Hôtel de Soissons, and on whose site now stands the *rotonde* of the Halle-au-blé with its surrounding streets. There, on the summit of Bullant's beautifully sculptured and lofty Doric column,—the sculpture defaced at the Revolution of '89—Catherine and her astrologers studied the starry heavens and the course of the constellations, and sought to read in the movements of the celestial orbs a motive or excuse for the deeds of darkness and blood by which she desolated France.

The alterations or improvements that Paris had undergone during two centuries and a half had been made strictly within the walls, an inclination to spread beyond them in the time of Francis I. having been checked by a decree of the parliament interdicting the erection of any new houses in the faubourgs and the reparation of those falling to decay. With-

out some stringent measure of this sort it was feared that the provinces would be depopulated, and overgrown Paris become a *chef-lieu*, menacing in times of sedition to the rest of the kingdom, and capable of even bidding defiance to its sovereign ; as indeed it did some fifty years later, at the time of the League. Then, Henry III., apostrophizing it as "*Chef du royaume, chef trop gros*," vowed the vain vow, as he prepared to besiege it, that when subdued, he would so thoroughly raze it from the face of the earth that not one stone of its buildings should be left upon another to mark the spot where the rebellious city had stood.

As the population increased, new streets were made narrower, and the houses higher—the result of this crowding and huddling together being frequent outbreaks of sickness and pestilence. To escape from the impure air of the city was Catherine's motive for building a palace outside the walls. She had suffered greatly in her health at Les Tournelles, and the Louvre itself was then closely surrounded by squalid fever-stricken streets. The demolition of Les Tournelles was a real boon to the Parisians. It occupied with its walls, bastions, towers and ditches, a large tract of ground, which when cleared was disposed of, together with that covered by its extensive walled parks and gardens, by public sale. New streets, new churches, new bridges were planned ; but beyond the planning little was done. The arts of peace could not flourish, for there was no repose in the country. The long struggle between Huguenot and Catholic had filled men's minds with murderous passions. Each one suspected his neighbor, and to be

suspected of heresy was to have every man's hand against him.

Then came the League with its incredible misery, sufferings and crimes. Catherine de Médicis dies, Henry III. is assassinated ; but the end of the struggle is not yet. Throughout the land fanaticism raises her voice to heaven, and wildly shrieks, " Let France be saved from the greatest of all calamities, submission to a Huguenot king." But Henry is not deterred by trifles. " A kingdom," he declares, " is worth a Mass." Mass is said and he is installed in his capital, and takes up his abode at the Louvre. Henry would have preferred the Tuileries, but found it too small conveniently to accommodate his court. The architect, Jacques Androuet Ducerceau, was therefore directed to furnish plans for the new wing and pavilion, and immediately to proceed with the further extension of the *grande galerie* of the Louvre—begun during the regency of Catherine. His purpose was to connect it with the palace of the Tuileries, for the king did not feel quite secure in his capital. And, according to Sauval, he was then very desirous of keeping open for himself a way of leaving Paris, in case of emergency, without being at the mercy of the populace, as his predecessor had been.

But as faction in a great degree ceased to exist, and the religious fervor and religious hate of both Catholic and Huguenot calmed down, Henry IV. became a popular king. His wish (or the expression attributed to him) that every poor man had a fat capon to put in his weekly *pot-au-feu*, appears to have gratified the poor man almost as much as the gift of the capon itself would have done. " Smiling

peace" was soon followed by plenty, for the lands around Paris, both to the north and the south, were so fertile, that with little culture (to quote Sauval again) they produced wheat in abundance, and all sorts of grain. Fruit was exceedingly plentiful, and "the vine grew and produced fruit luxuriantly, so that these lands might with reason be called the granary and the cellar of France." The improvements in Paris were numerous during Henry's reign. The arsenal was completed ; the Hôtel de Ville also. Its western *façade*, arcades, and some other portions, formed part of the enlarged edifice destroyed by the Parisian populace during their last insane raid on the architectural glories of their city. The splendid staircase, some sculptured doors and ceilings, and the fine monumental chimney-pieces in the throne-room, still remained of the interior arrangements of the Hôtel de Ville of the time of Henry IV.

The Pont Neuf was also finished ; it was then a very fine structure, with elaborately sculptured cornices, portions of which have been thought worthy of preservation in the Hôtel de Cluny. Spanning the Seine where the two arms of the river unite, the length of the bridge gave it an imposing appearance, and it was then the only one without houses. Half-way across it, was erected the famous fountain, or pump, called "La Samaritaine." Two life-size figures in gilt bronze, of Christ and the woman of Samaria, sculptured by Germain Pilon, stood under a pavilion, and on either side of a large gilt basin, into which flowed a stream of water that was conveyed through a reservoir to the Louvre. On the top of the pavilion was a sundial, and, above that, a clock with chimes and small gilt figures,

which struck the hours. The keeper, or guardian, of this edifice, bore the official title of "Gouverneur de la Samaritaine," and was allowed a good house close by for his residence. To keep the whole bright and in good working order, it was necessary frequently to regild the figures and repair the works. "The governor" was also an expensive personage, whose duties were performed by deputy. The Revolution of 1789 suppressed him ; and, as in the case of more valuable mementoes of old Paris, the wretched mob greatly injured the ancient fountain, and defaced the figures of Christ and the Samaritan woman. Its machinery, its curious clock and famous chimes, were the work of Jean Lintlaer, a Flemish mechanician. The last vestiges of its ruined pavilion were removed from the bridge in 1803.

We hardly expect to hear of Henry IV. founding a convent, yet that of the severe order of Capucine nuns owed its foundation to him. He was stimulated to this act of piety, it has been supposed, by a priest sent by Pope Paul V. on a secret mission to the king, who was so much pleased with the papal envoy that he conferred frequently and privately with him. The priest, like the king, was a Gascon ; *rusé*, and with the same disposition to banter, though of course more under control. Unfavorable rumors were then afloat respecting the sincerity of the king's adhesion to the Roman Catholic faith. His jovial air, and the little devotion his manner displayed when assisting at the services of the Church, had always kept doubt alive. But now he founds a convent of Capucine nuns ! Some good souls thankfully accepted the act as a proof of their monarch's orthodoxy. To others it seemed more like a satire

on his own mode of life ; while not a few found a stumbling-block to their faith in him in his persistent retention of the Huguenot beard. " If," they said, " it was a concession to the aggrieved feelings of his heretic subjects, it proved him to be but a lukewarm Catholic, or at least one who had not the courage of his convictions. The Huguenots, however, drew a hope from his continuance to wear it, that their renegade chief might yet be of the number of the predestined."

That he wore it from habit, or because he liked it, seems not to have occurred to either party. It was no doubt the cause of more than one of the many fanatical attempts to assassinate him, while a burning desire to avenge the dishonor his dissolute life had brought on some families instigated others. Whether the priest really suggested the convent, either in expiation of past misdeeds, or as a politic act at the time, cannot be confidently asserted. He was then an unknown priest, but in the following reign he exercised extraordinary influence in Paris, and many of its religious institutions and charities were due to him. He was a jocular, wily priest. He did much good, and some little harm, and used to say, laughingly : "*Que personne ne savait mieux remuer les écus dans les poches des riches.*" He was known then as M. Vincent—now, as a Saint, St. Vincent de Paul.

CHAPTER IV.

Statesmen and Generals.—Poets and Satirists.—Marie de Médicis.—The Poet Malherbe.—The Joys of Heaven —Ogier de Gombauld.—Religious Novels.—“Astrée,” a Pastoral Allegory.—Boileau’s Opinion of “Astrée.”—The lovelorn Marquis d’Urfé.—Diane de Châteaunormand.—A gentle Shepherd and Shepherdess.—Death of the Shepherd.—“Les Amours du Grand Alcandre.”

MOST of the distinguished men who shed lustre on the reign of Louis XIV., whether as statesmen, generals, men of letters, poets, painters, etc., as well as the prose writers of both sexes, were born in the latter part of the reign of Henry IV., or during that of Louis XIII. Side by side with the great vices of those reigns, the talent and genius that were so fully developed under the regency of Anne of Austria and the first years of the reign of Louis XIV., gradually budded and expanded. Even those literary celebrities of the latter years of the century, who were most free from that spirit of adulation which grew out of Louis’ belief in himself as a demigod, at least, and which fettered the genius of such men as Racine, and made the muse of Molière the apologist of the vices of the monarch, were formed under the auspices, or after the example, of their predecessors who had flourished under the regency. To achieve success under the “Grand Monarque,” it was far less necessary to merit it than to secure his favor, and this could only be done by chanting pæans of praise in his honor, and offering the incense of flattery at his

shrine, amidst the gross fumes of which genius was too often stifled.

Beyond learned treatises on dry, dreary subjects, and no less dreary and voluminous theological writings, there was little or no literature in the time of Henry IV., but licentious poems and satires. But such writers who did take this lighter pen in hand, employed it, both in that and the succeeding reign, far more frequently to satirize and lecture the king than to flatter him. And Henry, especially, took this freedom of speech in good part. If, incorrigible sinner as he was, his morals were not improved by it, he, at all events, was amused. For he is said often to have read these productions, and greatly to have enjoyed such fun as there was in them, but never attempted to restrain the excessive license of the writers. Such toleration must have had a beneficial influence on the authors of that higher caste of literature which succeeded the "journals and satires" of Henry's day. The dramatist or poet could more freely give the rein to imagination, and infuse more real spirit and *verve* into his subject when untrammelled by the necessity of portraying, disguised under the name of some hero of antiquity, the hypothetical virtues and perfections of a pompous and vainglorious royal patron.

When Marie de Médicis was invested with absolute powers, and began her stormy career as queen-regent, she distributed pensions and places and titles with a very lavish hand, in order to gain over to her interests those friends of Henry who were opposed to her assumption of the regency. But in immediately bestowing a pension of five hundred *écus* upon Malherbe, she was prompted by a higher appreciation of

the merits of the poet than Henry was capable of. She was ambitious, not only of governing France, but of governing grandly ; and her ideas were grand though she had no grandeur in her character, and possessed none of the qualities for judiciously governing. She desired popularity, but was deficient in the tact necessary to acquire it, and had no winning graciousness or charm in her manners ; but in her love of the Muses and *les beaux arts*, she was a true daughter of the Médici.

Malherbe has been called "the father of modern French poetry." His odes and sonnets are often licentious in tone, as were the manners of the age, but there is a grace and charm in much of his verse due to the perfection and purity with which he wrote the French language. Boileau considered Malherbe the first French author whose writings afforded an example of "the power of words rightly placed." Though a Court poet, Malherbe was poor. Henry very parsimoniously repaid the laureate's graceful and frequently charming stanzas, idealizing the attractions of the *belles*, both *brunes* and *blondes*, by whom his royal master by turns was enslaved. When, sonnet in hand, the poor poet appeared before the king, he is said almost to have asked an alms for it.

Malherbe's known sensitiveness to any deviation from the purity of the language, when spoken as well as written, is shown by an anecdote told of him, whether it be strictly true or not. He had been prevailed on, when near his end, to be confessed by a priest. The good father afterwards proceeded to expatiate, in language neither classical nor poetical, on the joys awaiting the dying man in heaven. Malherbe listened, evidently much disturbed in mind.

The priest attributed it to conscience awakened by his eloquence, and became more earnest, and, as he thought, more impressive. The old poet could endure it no longer. Raising himself in his bed, he exclaimed, "Improve your style, sir! You have disgusted me with the joys of heaven!" then fell back exhausted on his pillow. An old nurse sat by the bedside; she had been much edified to hear of the joys of heaven. Now she rose, looked sadly at the priest, and whispered, "Poor man! poor man! His head is quite gone, sir. Only an hour ago he raved at me, even worse, sir, even worse, and called out, 'Who is your authority for that word?' though I spoke to him quite kind and civil. Poor man, his head is gone!"

Another *protégé* of Marie de Médicis (no poet of that day was without his patron) was the poet and epigrammatist, Ogier de Gombauld. He was as solicitous as Malherbe himself that the purity of the French language should be strictly maintained, and, as a means of ensuring it, proposed to the French Academy, of which he was one of the first members, that the academicians should bind themselves by oath to use no words that a majority of the society had not approved. Marie de Médicis gave him a pension of twelve hundred *écus*. But Marie's pensioners were unfortunate; the amount they received fluctuating with her fluctuating fortunes, until payment ceased altogether, and their royal patroness was herself an indigent wanderer, dependent on the sympathy and charity of foreigners. De Gombauld was a younger son of a noble Protestant family, and no expectation of court favor, poor though he was, induced him to change the Reformed for the Roman

faith. He was born in the persecuting days of Charles IX., and lived far into the reign of Louis XIV., attaining to nearly a hundred years. His works, and especially his epigrams, had considerable vogue and success in their day.

To De Gombauld, Malherbe, Vaugelas, and Jean Louis de Balzac, the French language owes much of its beauty, clearness, and harmony. The *société d'élite* of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, whose example afterwards gave a tone of refinement to French society generally, imparted the same polished elegance also to the language, and purged it of those *grossièretés* which Molière and others would have retained, qualifying their indecencies by such terms as *naïveté* and *franchise*. But even Molière was compelled to abandon, in his later productions, some few of the coarse expressions that hitherto had found so much favor with him. And it was in deference to an authority which, though he rebelled against it, proved greater than his own ; the purer literary taste that *préciosité*—a word unknown to the French language until late in the century—notwithstanding some affectations, had been the means of diffusing far beyond the circles of Rambouillet and its successors.

In the early years of the seventeenth century, the ladies improved their minds, or sought amusement in leisure hours, by reading the works of Rabelais, or the poems of Ronsard. They had besides, as a corrective, “*Philothée*,” a religious novel, by St. Jean Damoscène. It was called “*Le roman des dévots*,” *par excellence*. “*Amours d'Euryale et de Lucrece*,” written by Pope Pius II., and therefore, no doubt, very edifying, if not very amusing, also

retained favor, and a place on the scantily furnished bookshelves of *les dames châtelaines*.

A few months before the death of Henry IV., the first volume of "Astrée" appeared, a romance, by the Marquis d'Urfé. From the extraordinary influence it had on the manners of the day, it is considered to have initiated that change in them which was confirmed by the society that met at the Hôtel de Rambouillet some years later. "Astrée" is a pastoral allegory, and describes the *amours platoniques* of the author, interspersed with many episodes of the gallantries of the court of Henry IV. But it is perfectly pure in tone. The characters are numerous, and it would be difficult to select, where all are important, a hero and heroine; but the title suggests the latter, and the author was known to be the former. Shepherds and shepherdesses are the principal personages, who, in long and rather vague conversations, and dissertations of unconscionable length, set forth the delights of chaste love, and the joys of an *honnête amitié*. Their language is sentimental in the extreme, and thus suited to the subject of their discourse; but affectations abound, and the high-flown expressions and dogmatic tone of some of the speakers give one the idea that these shepherds and shepherdesses are really only courtiers and sophists in disguise. The adventures of this rambling company are, however, numerous, and often amusing.

To retain popularity, as "Astrée" did, for upwards of half a century, a work must necessarily possess some merit. Boileau speaks of it as "*une narration vive et fleurie, ses caractères finement marqués, agréablement variés et bien suivés.*" "Astrée" was published in five quarto volumes, which appeared in

succession, at irregular intervals, in the course of fifteen years ; ten elapsed between the publication of the first and second volumes. The first was dedicated to Henry IV., who was pleased with the work. He received it but a short time before his assassination, and as he was then confined to his bed by gout, he desired it to be read to amuse him. The new species of gallantry "*Astrée*" introduced to his notice, met with his approval, for though differing so greatly from his own, it coincided with it in one respect—it inculcated a system that made woman the object of universal homage.

The personal history of the Marquise d'Urfé has some romance in it. Henry had a strong aversion to him. He was one of the Leaguers, and, refusing to submit, was made prisoner of war. Soon after he escaped. Being a remarkably handsome man, witty in conversation, *distingué* in manners, Marguérite, Henry's wife, had fallen deeply in love with him. But the marquis was at that time the despairing slave of a hopeless passion for the celebrated beauty Diane de Châteaunormand, who, by an arrangement between his and her family, had become the wife of his elder brother. D'Urfé was therefore insensible to the fascinations of Marguérite. The cause of his melancholy being made known to her, her interest in him increased, and as it was evident that his heart was irrevocably disposed of, she contrived that he should soon be on his way to the court of Turin, his family being related to the House of Savoy. The lovelorn marquis then determined to become a knight of Malta. No sooner had he taken his vow, than his brother, animated by religious zeal, was desirous of being freed from the marriage yoke, in

order to enter the Church as a cloistered monk. His application to Rome was complied with, and the beautiful Diane was free. The younger D'Urfé now, in his turn, addressed himself to Rome, praying to be absolved from his vow of celibacy. Interest and money aiding him, his prayer was granted, and, by the same means, a dispensation obtained, enabling him to marry his brother's wife.

But disappointment awaited the unfortunate marquis. Diane had been willing to marry him, because it prevented the alienation of certain estates, but as to love, she had none to give to her rapturous and adoring swain. She was beautiful as early spring, but intensely selfish, her deepest feeling being great admiration of her own charms. Profoundly grieved at her insensibility to his devotion to her, D'Urfé left his *belle marquise* and retired to a distant estate, where he sought to soothe his wounded spirit by depicting the pure pleasures of an ideal love. The story of his romantic and unrequited passion, his deep melancholy, his secluded life, gave added interest and extraordinary vogue to his romance. The succeeding volumes were looked for with an anxiety that did not abate during the fifteen years that expectation was kept on the stretch, and they were all equally well received as the first. When D'Urfé had completed his fifth volume, he died. The story of his hapless love being told, his work in this world was finished. By his direction the last volume was published by his secretary. The learned Huet, Bishop of Avranches, who wrote a work on "L'Origine des Romans," says that St. François de Sales read "Astrée" with intense delight, and named it "*le bréviaire des courtisans.*"

Arcadia became the rage ; the ladies were desirous of reproducing those scenes of pastoral love and idleness. But the gardens attached to the houses of the nobility in Paris, though large, were yet too confined, and their trees and shrubs too much clipped into formal devices to bear any resemblance to D'Urfé's Arcadian bowers and groves, sacred to gentle shepherds and shepherdesses in silks and lace. Yet the attempt to realize the pastoral life was really made in the faubourg by Vauquelin des Ivetaux, who had been Governor of Caen, and was afterwards preceptor to the Duc de Vendôme, and to the dauphin. He had led a dissipated life, but, having read "*Astrée*," he was so charmed with the pastoral one that he resolved to forsake his irregularities, and to seek, in the evening of his days (he was then between sixty and seventy) the pure joys and peace that Arcadia promised.

He retired to a house with large gardens, which belonged to him, in the Faubourg St. Germain. There, dressed in the correct shepherd costume, with his rustic pipe, and by his side a pretty shepherdess, in pink and blue silk, and a crook trimmed with ribands and lace, he wandered about his grounds. The shepherd carried a lute, and when he and his *gentile amie* reposed beneath a shady tree, or lounged near a pond that did duty for a crystal stream, he played on his pipe while the lady twanged the lute and sang a few snatches of song. The gentleman led two lambs by a silken cord. They were "the milk-white flock," and lay at the feet of the shepherd and shepherdess when they sat down on a grassy slope to expatiate on the delights and pure joys of pastoral life and sentimental friendship. M. des Ivetaux

lived in this way for some years, when weather permitted ; and, as he lived to the age of ninety, it may be presumed that he found pastoral life pleasant and easy, and that rusticating agreed with him. He went out of the world to the sound of the lute and shepherd's pipe, accompanying an idyl of his own composing, for he was a tolerable poet. He thought that sweet simple sounds soothed the spirit when winging its flight from earth to the bowers of bliss. The end of this shepherd was peace.

"Astrée" had many imitators, but none that met with a like success, for none was inspired by a romantic passion such as guided the pen of D'Urfé. "Les Amours du Grand Alcandre" owed its origin to the success of "Astrée." The Princess de Conti (Louise de Lorraine) was its author, Henry IV. its hero. The work was satirical ; but how thoroughly gross-minded the age must have been when a woman of rank and influence, and with a great reputation for learning, selected as a theme for her pen the frightful depravity of Henry IV., with a view of rendering it diverting, under the guise of a pastoral romance, as light reading for her own sex. The princess herself had been the object of one of Henry's numerous but short-lived *grandes passions*. In the midst of this general corruption, one pure-minded woman, disgusted with the vice of the court, withdrew from it, and resolved to attempt the regeneration of society—that woman was the Marquise de Rambouillet.

CHAPTER V.

Betrothal of Catherine de Vivonne and the Count d'Angennes.—The Pisani Family.—The Nobles and Clergy.—Educated Women.—Margu  rite de France.—Desire for Social Intercourse.—La Folie Rambouillet.—The Old H  tel Pisani.—The H  tel de Rambouillet.—The Salon Bleu.—The Luxembourg Palace.—The Marquise de Rambouillet.—Rising Influence of Rambouillet.—The Marquis de Racan.—Armand du Plessis.—The Ladies of the Rambouillet Circle.

IN the same year (the first of the seventeenth century) that Henry IV. married Marie de M  dicis, Catherine de Vivonne, daughter of the Marquis Pisani, was betrothed to the Count d'Angennes, eldest son of the Marquis de Rambouillet. Catherine was then but twelve years of age. Four years after, their marriage was solemnized, and the young Countess d'Angennes was introduced to a court the most depraved in morals, the grossest and most unpolished in manners, of any in Europe. She was immediately appointed one of the *dames d'honneur* of the queen.

The Pisani family was of Italian origin, and distantly connected with that of the M  dicis, but had settled in France from the time of Francis I. Several of its members had served in the French army ; others had held offices of state. They had married into French families, had become thoroughly French in their sympathies, and for two generations past they were French by birth. The families of both Rambouillet and Pisani had belonged to that "*parti de*

milieu'' of moderate Catholics who had favored the pretensions of Henry of Navarre to the throne. There were eight brothers D'Angennes, and none of them had joined the League. It was the eldest son of the eldest of these brothers who had married Catherine de Vivonne. He held a military command, and, naturally, was high in favor with the king.

The young countess inherited a very large fortune—an immense one, it was thought in those days. She had been brought up in much seclusion, and had become attached to sedentary pursuits. She was fond of reading and conversation, had some skill in painting and architectural drawing, acquired, probably, during a residence in Italy. The boisterous revels of the court afforded her no pleasure; those "*ballets de la reine, ballets du roi, ballets de la cour,*" etc., in all of which, queen, king, courtiers and ladies, took each a character, and danced and sang—the royal band of six violins accompanying—to the best of their ability, no doubt, but, at all events, gleefully and lustily. For those grandees, of whom the greater number were in intellectual culture scarcely on a level with the rude and unlettered classes of the present day, found, like them, the keenest of their pleasures in noise and energetic movement. And there was plenty of this gross hilarity while Henry reigned.

The general clergy, in intelligence, morals, and manners, were about on a par with the laity. The canons of Notre Dame and the Sainte Chapelle were for ever quarrelling and scuffling when they met, each claiming to take the *pas* of the other. Even several years later, when Louis XIII. solemnly placed France under the protection of the Virgin Mary, "In order that all his loyal subjects might be received into

Paradise, such being his goodwill and pleasure," the Parliament and the members of the Chamber of Finance contended so vehemently for precedence in the procession, that they came to blows in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. When any unusual rise in the Seine occurred ; any outbreak of plague or smallpox, from the general filthiness of the city ; the fall of a bridge from the undue weight of its houses, or similar catastrophe ; to prevent a recurrence of it, the jawbone of St. This, the finger-joint of St. That, and the body of poor old St. Denis, dragged from its coffin, were carried in procession to the shrine of some dilapidated image of the Virgin, who might be prevailed on, it was hoped, by prayers and presents to appease the Divine wrath, to which the people were taught to ascribe their calamities.

Education, for the most part, was despised by the accomplished cavaliers and *grand seigneurs* of those days. Some few condescended to read and write ; but in war, the duel, the chase, and the dance, all aspired to acquit themselves well.

Woman, not improbably, might be the cause of a war or a duel, but as she was not required to take part in it, and frequently did not join in the pleasures or hardships of the chase, she had generally more instruction and culture than the men of the period, and to this was chiefly owing the social pre-eminence she attained in France. The seclusion of the *vie de château* was as favorable to her acquirement of studious habits and the indulgence of literary tastes, as was the cloister to the intellectually gifted monk. Many women knew something of Latin, if only so much as enabled them to follow the sense of the prayers in their *livres d'heures*. This little often led

to the further study of the language, and the attainment of considerable proficiency in it. Margu  rite de France, Henry's first wife, is said to have replied to the Latin address of the Bishop of Cracow (one of the ambassadors deputed to offer the crown of Poland to her brother, the Duke of Anjou) with so much fluency and eloquence, that he was no less delighted than surprised by it.

The Countess d'Angennes appears to have had less knowledge of Latin, as it is stated that her desire to read Virgil led her to study the language, but that ill-health compelled her to discontinue it. She, however, was well acquainted with Italian and Spanish. The latter was acquired in Spain, whither she accompanied her husband. She brought thence to Paris that fashion of alcoves which she introduced into her own h  tel, and which so long remained, and to a certain degree still continues, a favorite arrangement in French bedrooms. After the birth of her daughter (in later years the celebrated Julie d'Angennes), she withdrew from the Louvre, and returned to it no more, except on the occasion when she was named by Henry one of the *dames d'honneur* to attend Marie de M  dicis at her coronation.

The Marquise de Rambouillet (her husband's father had lately died) was then in her twentieth year—" *belle, bonne et spirituelle.*" Other ladies to whom culture had imparted a refinement of manners out of harmony with the discord and scandal that reigned at court, also held aloof from its coarse pleasures and noisy gaieties ; for at that time a strong and general desire was awakened amongst persons of rank and easy fortune for social communication, intimate and varied, yet more polished than hitherto

had existed in France. The social instinct was born, but as yet its influence was small ; for there was no society apart from the court ; no *salons* thrown open for the reception of distinguished *littérateurs*, and no social *réunions*. The theatre—the favorite amusement of the marquise—was open only now and then ; the performances also were occasional, and *loges à l'année* not then introduced. The French Academy was not yet founded, and the men who were to shed most lustre upon it were either unborn, still unknown to fame, or mere youths, and their talents immature.

But the Hôtel de Rambouillet was about to be erected—that renowned hôtel, destined to welcome and foster rising genius and talent ; to assemble rank, beauty, wit, worth and learning in its celebrated *salon bleu*, and by the influence of its *société d'élite* on the manners and literature of the age to achieve a social revolution, and to acquire lasting fame in the republic of letters. Meanwhile “*Je me figure,*” writes Roederer, “*que jamais on n'eut autant besoin de se parler de s'épancher, en France ni ailleurs qu'à cette époque.*”

French writers differ greatly in their accounts of the famous Hôtel de Rambouillet, as regards its situation and date of erection. Not a vestige of it now remains to fix either with certainty. It has sometimes been confounded with the Hôtel Rambouillet built by the rich financier, father of Rambouillet de la Sablière, the poet, and husband of Madame de la Sablière, celebrated in the verse of La Fontaine and the Marquis de la Fare. This edifice was generally known at that time as “*La Folie Rambouillet.*” It was built on his estate at the village of Reuilly, where now the Rue de Rambouillet joins the Avenue Mon-

mesnil. Its gardens were celebrated for their extent and beauty. Others make the old Hôtel Pisani, rechristened and embellished, do duty for the hôtel that was built from the designs of the marquise herself. Tallemant des Reaux, who was an intimate friend of the marquise, and a frequenter of her *salon*, and therefore should be correctly informed, says : " Her father sold the old Hôtel Pisani, in 1606, for 345,000 liv., and the Cardinal de Richelieu, in 1624, bought it for 30,000 *écus*, when it was taken down, and the Palais Cardinal, afterwards Palais Royal, built on its site." It was an ancient domain ; in appearance, almost a feudal *château*.

The new Hôtel de Rambouillet was built in grounds or gardens already belonging to the family in the Rue St. Thomas du Louvre. The marquise herself was its architect. No design that was offered pleased her, and her own was entirely followed ; yet there were then in Paris several Italian architects of repute, invited by Marie de Médicis, who, on assuming the regency, determined on building herself a palace, in imitation of her relative and predecessor, Catherine.

The Hôtel de Rambouillet was of red brick and slate, with embrasures, cornices, friezes, architraves, and pilasters of freestone. These materials were then generally employed for large buildings, and were thought to combine well and to harmonize agreeably to the eye.* Rambouillet was of less extent than many of the hôtels of the nobility ; but the space at command was so skilfully turned to account, the

* When the rich bourgeois built themselves houses after the same fashion, this combination of red, white, and slate color immediately went out of favor, as giving the appearance of a house built of cards.

apartments so admirably proportioned and disposed with so much art, that the effect was that of a mansion more spacious than many that were in fact larger, but were less judiciously and conveniently arranged.

There were four principal *salons* leading into each other on the ground-floor ; an arrangement which, with their high, wide doors and long windows, reaching from floor to ceiling, was first introduced by the marquise, and afterwards copied in the Petit Luxembourg, in Richelieu's palace, and the yet unfinished houses of the Place Royale. Indeed, Rambouillet served as a model for many of the châteaux and palaces of France in the seventeenth century. The loftiness of its *salons*, its circular staircase, leading to the *corps de logis*, or range of rooms on the first floor, with the long line of doors at equal distances, and facing each other, were all novelties that met with general approval and adoption. The gardens extended the whole length of the suite of *salons*, affording a pleasant view, as well as light and air. The *salons* were thrown open or closed, according as the society was more or less numerous ; but all were superbly furnished.

The marquise is said to have been the first to innovate on the custom of coloring or painting the rooms of a red tint or a tawny dark yellow. Hence the admiration bestowed on the "*salon bleu*," apart from its being the principal *salle de réunion*. Its walls were hung with blue velvet, panelled in borders of gold. The furniture was of the same material, relieved by gold fringes and lace. "The air was perfumed with the odor of flowers, arranged in beautiful vases and baskets, and in such profusion

that eternal spring seemed to reign there." In the evening the *salons* were lighted with lamps of Venetian glass, also first seen at Rambouillet ; and there were splendid Italian cabinets, filled with the choicest and rarest specimens of delicate sculpture, scarce enamels, gems, and other articles of *virtu*. Amongst the many treasures of the *salon bleu* was a spinet, a marvel of its kind, brought by the marquise from Italy. It was exquisitely painted with flowers and birds, and inlaid with turquoise, gold, and pearl.* It is probable that its ornamentation enchanted the eye more than its music the ear. The lute and the *théorbe* were the instruments then in vogue for the voice ; the violins for a dance ; but whether Rambouillet danced we have not been told. Only the stately minuet could have found favor there ; certainly no "*ballet du roi*" of the court of that time. The opera was not yet introduced into France, and Lulli was not yet born.

" Rambouillet was built in the time of le Maréchal d'Ancre." It was completed about 1614, when the park and gardens of the Luxembourg Palace were being laid out and planted. The palace itself was not begun until the following year ; for although Marie de Médicis had employed the architect De Brosse to furnish the designs, they were only finally accepted after having been submitted to almost every architect of note in France and Italy, and some few of the alterations they suggested adopted. They

* The South Kensington Museum has a spinet of the latter part of the sixteenth century. It is of Italian workmanship, and may resemble the Rambouillet spinet, though perhaps less richly ornamented ; yet it is an interesting work of art. It belonged to an Italian princess of that period.

were also inspected, at the queen's request, by Madame de Rambouillet, and every part of her hôtel was visited by De Brosse before the works at the Luxembourg were begun. But the architect's visit was intended probably as a compliment only to the talented marquise ; for De Brosse proposed to recall the style of the Pitti Palace—where the queen had usually resided while at the court of her father, the Grand Duke of Tuscany—in the *façades* of the sumptuous Palais de Luxembourg. And its interior arrangement naturally would differ greatly from that of the private mansion of one of the nobility.

Madame de Rambouillet was about twenty-six years of age when her hôtel was furnished and ready for occupation. We learn from writers of the day that she was very tall and of dignified carriage. (All the family, both sons and daughters, were so much above the middle height, that they were called familiarly, "*les sapins de Rambouillet.*") Her features were regular, her eyes and complexion fine. Whenever she is mentioned in contemporary epistolary writings and memoirs, it is always with respect and admiration—an agreement in opinion of which they afford scarcely another instance, when referring to any celebrated person of the time. Mademoiselle de Scudéry speaks of her as "beautiful, witty, gentle, and generous ; constant in friendship, good, just, and pure." No foreigner of any distinction visited Paris but sought an opportunity of paying her the homage so justly due to her ; and so highly was her judgment esteemed on subjects connected with literature and art, that not only would poets submit their verses to her, but often skilled workmen sought her approval of their choicest artistic productions.

Rambouillet only gradually acquired its great influence and eminence ; it did not immediately become the tribunal of language and taste, the centre "*d'une société polie.*" It was checked at the outset by the spirit of discord that reigned in the capital. Marie de Médicis had not only proved incapable of governing the kingdom, but had allowed herself to be governed by arrogant and unprincipled Italian favorites, who filled every lucrative office of state, and were intent on enriching themselves at the expense of the oppressed people. Many noble families had withdrawn from the court in disgust, and retired to their *châteaux* in the provinces. But the poets Malherbe and Ogier de Gombauld, with Vaugelas, the classical writer, and Jean Louis de Balzac—then not more than twenty years of age—were among the first of the *gens de lettres* of that day who frequented the Hôtel de Rambouillet. The young Marquis de Racan was also of their number ; he afterwards wrote the life of Malherbe, having been a disciple of the old poet, who instructed him in the art of versification. From reading D'Urfé's "*Astrée*," Racan had become imbued with the same sentimental and romantic ideas. He either was, or fancied himself, passionately in love with the marquise, and poured forth the story of his woes in his "*Bergeries*," the most popular of his poetical works. He also depicted his passion and the coldness and indifference of his *bergère*, Arthénice (Malherbe's anagram of Catherine) in a pastoral play. Boileau, in his "*Art Poétique*," says :

" Malherbe d'un héros peut vanter les exploits ;
Racan chanter Phillis, les bergers et les bois."

Racan cured himself of his hopeless passion for the

belle marquise by going for a time to the wars and afterwards taking a wife.

By adopting the name of Arthenice, Madame de Rambouillet has been considered to have given the first example of an affectation which was afterwards largely imitated. All women of any celebrity had their "*noms de Parnasse*," so called by La Fontaine, who christened so many of the Sylvias, Phillises, etc., of the day, the Hôtel de Rambouillet itself being known as "*Le Parnasse Français*."

Armand du Plessis, Bishop of Luçon, afterwards Cardinal de Richelieu, but then almoner to the queen, was one of the early *habituels* of the hôtel, and more than once took part there in the discussion of a thesis, whose subject was love. Du Plessis went to Rome in 1609, to be created a bishop, when he was under the prescribed age by two years. Pope Paul V. having inquired what was his age, Du Plessis did not hesitate to make a false statement to his Holiness. But when the ceremony was ended, he confessed that he had told an untruth, and prayed that the pope would grant him absolution, which he did, remarking, "*Questo giovane sera un gran furbo*."

The names of the ladies who first formed part of the learned society of Rambouillet are not mentioned in the writings of the time. We learn only that Madame la Princesse de Condé was one of them, and generally they may then have been more distinguished for their rank than learning. Ségrais, at a later date, when the Hôtel was at the height of its reputation, says, "Although the rank of Madame de Rambouillet was below that of duchess, she was held in such high esteem that princesses waived all considerations of etiquette for the pleasure of assisting at her *réunions*."

CHAPTER VI.

Louis XIII.—The Brothers D'Albert.—Revels à l'Italienne.—Le Maréchal d'Ancre.—La Perle du Marais.—The Hôtel Lesdiguières.—The Cours de la Reine.—Statue of Henry IV.—Prevalence of Duelling.—The Queen a Peacemaker.—The Double Spanish Marriage.—Quadrilles d'Arioste.—Marriage Fêtes.—The Girl-queen, Anne of Austria.—Marguérite de France.

Louis XIII. makes but a sorry figure on the page of history. The stormy, imperious, and imprudent Queen-regent, Marie de Médicis, and the powerful, energetic, and implacable Minister, De Richelieu, overshadow his reign, and are throughout it far more important personages than the gloomy, weak, and irresolute king. Louis was surnamed "The Just," but not for the justice of his acts. The surname was given to him by the astrologers who were in attendance at his birth to cast his nativity—as was the common custom in that superstitious age—and who announced that the royal infant had come into the world under the zodiacal sign of the Balance. As a child, he was obstinate, disobedient, and sullen, qualities which Marie endeavored to have flogged out of him. She spared not the rod, and at times, with her own plump white hand, administered the needful correction.

His youthful Majesty was rarely willing to say his prayers, in spite of the whipping he knew was in store for him ; yet often, when to work on his fears the terrible punishment awaiting such miserable sinners in another world was too forcibly set before him, he

would suddenly, in terror, sink on his knees, and hurriedly and incoherently repeat his orisons. His frame of mind at the time was no doubt similar to that attributed to him in after years when it was said, in allusion to the urgency of his devotions, that "no man loved God less or feared the prince of darkness more." His education was greatly neglected. After the old French fashion, he was surrounded with young pages of noble family; obsequious playmates, who had been taught to yield to all his humors and childish caprices. Louis was a stammerer, and much of his ill-temper, reserve, and gloom may be attributed to that defect. His favorites were the two brothers D'Albert (originally Alberti, of Florence). They were many years older than Louis, but had gained his favor by their skill in falconry. Louis, like his father, loved the sound of the hunting-horn, the movement of the chase, the forests of Fontainebleau, and after the manner of a page of the middle ages, devoted himself to the training of hawks. He had learned of Charles D'Albert to make nets, thongs, overalls of leather, and various articles required for hawking and hunting. As Louis grew up he displayed, says the caustic Tallemant des Réaux, "*Cent vertus de valet, et pas une vertu de maître.*"

The queen-regent meanwhile was giving a ceaseless round of public *fêtes*, revels *à l'Italienne*, carrousels, and tournaments, in which the laws and rules of the old *chevalerie* were revived, and with extraordinary splendor of knightly accoutrements, embroidered banners, etc. There were fireworks also, and at Vincennes combats of animals. Vincennes had a menagerie then, and an open court with tiers of seats for spectators of the fight. Marie de Médicis

was courting popularity both for herself and the Concini. The council of regency was divided into the Italian party and the party of the French nobility. She wished to gain over the latter, and to ingratiate herself with the populace. The Maréchal d'Ancre (Concini) had introduced *les jeux de bague* and other games requiring skill and dexterity. In these he acquitted himself with remarkable grace and elegance. He was a handsome man, and far more polished in manners than Henry's rude warrior friends. These rough soldiers regarded both him and his sports, and all the tribe of les Gondi, Concini, Alberti, and Strozzi, predecessors of les Mazarini, with ineffable contempt. But the ladies looked on with favor, smiled on the Italian, bestowed plaudits upon him, and playfully pelted him with flowers, perfumed gloves, and handkerchiefs steeped in essences.

Most of these *fêtes* took place in the Place Royale, which was entirely finished in 1616. Henry had intended it for a splendid bazaar, in imitation of the Place St. Marc at Venice, and the houses for bathing establishments after the oriental fashion. But the *beau monde* took a fancy to the Place Royale. This immense quadrilateral, with its four wide roads for horses and carriages, and causeways for foot passengers, was at that time one of the greatest improvements of Paris, and from the elegant style of its architecture, its greatest embellishment. The interior and exterior of the spacious houses were finished and decorated to harmonize with their new destination, and the *haute noblesse* took up their quarters there. When the weather was fine, the gardens were thronged with cavaliers and ladies, who sauntered

through the carefully clipped elm-tree walks bordered with box cut into hearts, true lovers' knots, and various other devices. Two stone fountains sculptured with tritons, dolphins, etc., stood in the gardens—one at each end. The galleries of the surrounding houses afforded a covered walk, opening on the square by a hundred and forty-four arches. La Place Royale was considered "La perle du marais," and that new faubourg (Paris was not then divided into its twenty *quartiers*) became renowned later on in the seventeenth century. Rank and fashion, wealth and beauty dwelt there, and *une société spirituelle* assembled in the noble *salons* of its spacious mansions. Delicate carvings, exquisite paintings enriched the cornices, doors, and ceilings; Venetian mirrors, Florentine tapestry adorned the walls; silks, damasks, and rich brocatelle covered the gilded *fauteuils* and *canapés*.

In the Rue St. Antoine and neighboring streets were also several splendid private mansions or *hôtels* of the nobility. Some two or three were of the previous century, and decorated by the celebrated sculptor Jean Goujon. The Hôtel Béthune, the residence of the Minister Sully, was built for him at the beginning of Henry IV.'s reign by Ducerceau, on a part of the site of the Palais des Tournelles. Its façade is finely sculptured. But of all the *hôtels* of the Rue St. Antoine, the Hôtel Lesdiguières was the most celebrated for the splendor of its furniture. Sauval speaks of the principal *salle* as "*plus que royale*." Its hangings were of brocade woven with gold thread, with mother of pearl and coral worked in, in arabesques. The greater part of the furniture was of massive silver, beautifully chased, and the

parts in relief gilded. There were Venetian cabinets of the most exquisite workmanship and elegant design. Vases and girandoles of rock crystal, ancient bronzes, rare marbles and ivories, rich tapestry, and valuable paintings. This celebrated hôtel gave its name to a street, but no vestige of the building now exists. Its treasures were dispersed, and the family is extinct. But the Hôtel Béthune, or Sully, remains an interesting specimen of French architecture, of the latter part of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century.

The promenade known as "the Cours de la Reine," was, by order of Marie de Médicis, planted with four rows of trees, and thrown open to the public. It was of the length of a Roman stadium ; about the eighth of an English mile. The Maréchal de Bassompierre asked and obtained permission to pave the slopes with freestone at his own expense. He also placed at each end of the drive a handsome iron gate supported by sculptured stone-work. The Cours de la Reine was the resort of the court and the *beau monde* during the warm summer evenings.

The queen-regent was very desirous of embellishing Paris. In the first year of her regency the little king laid the first stone of the buildings designed for the College of France, which had existed in name from the time of Francis I., but "local habitation" it had none, until Marie, sixty years after, gave it one. The aqueduct of Arcueil, the first construction of the kind in France, was also due to her, and the grand pavilion over the entrance to the Louvre. The equestrian statue of Henry IV. on the Pont Neuf was a present to the queen from the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Cosmo II. put it on board a

vessel that went ashore on a mud-bank, just after leaving the harbor. With much labor it was transferred uninjured to another, which carried it safely to Havre. It arrived in 1614, but was not placed on the bridge until some years after. Louis laid the first stone of the marble pedestal. The four figures representing the four quarters of the world were sculptured by Pierre de Franqueville. This statue of Henry IV. was the first statue erected in Paris to the honor of any French king. It was the work of the famous Giovanni da Bologna.

In 1615 the queen laid the first stone of her Palace of Luxembourg, which she was destined never to inhabit. The Rue de Seine, leading to it, was also begun. It was outside the old limits, beyond which Paris was gradually extending itself, especially on the north side of the river. The new bridge, Pont Marie, and the houses of the Ile St. Louis—built by M. Marie, a rich bourgeois of Paris, who obtained a grant of the site from the queen—as well as many other changes and improvements in the city and faubourgs, were all either made by order of Marie de Médicis or were approved by her.

Duelling then prevailed to so great an extent—notwithstanding that by a recent law it was prohibited, and heavy penalties enacted against transgressors—that it was necessary for every *gentilhomme* to be a skilful swordsman. So sensitive were the honorable gentlemen of that age, that it was not unusual for them to have to call on each other in the course of a conversation “to eat their words,” or draw their swords, more than once or twice in the day. Some *preux chevalier* took offence at the indiscreet utterance of another *preux*, and only shedding of blood could

atone for outraged honor. Apology was of course out of the question. The consequence was that the fencing schools—they were called academies then—were very numerously attended. An old writer boasts of there being six academies in the Faubourg St. Germain alone, and doubts whether any other city in Europe possessed so many. These academies were presided over by old officers of small means, but who, if skilful with the sword, made a very good income by their teaching.

“ The manner of carrying the rapier* was with the point upwards, the hand on the guard at the side of the hip, so as slightly to raise the cloak, as if to present a continual menace of crossing swords in a duel, and of a meeting at two paces’ distance in the *Pré de la Bastille*.” Duels often took place in the streets ; the cause, questions of etiquette, or perhaps family hatreds and feuds ; for a spirit of great disorder reigned throughout society—Catholic against Protestant, family against family. When collisions of this kind occurred, the queen often personally interfered, either to reconcile the combatants or to order them to disarm and remain in their *hôtels* until anger had cooled down and they had come to their senses. When she succeeded in pacifying the aggrieved parties, or in adjusting the difficulty that was the cause of the combat, she took great credit to herself, and expressed her satisfaction in council. But her peace was often troubled, and considerable annoyance caused her by scurrilous pamphlets, and *pasquinades* after the Italian fashion. The manners of her court were satirized, her government of the kingdom censured.

* Collett’s “ *Cavaliers de Règne de Louis XIII.* ”

However, her domestic government continued strong, pressing less heavily on her second son, Gaston, than on Louis, who was now fourteen. He was of age, and might, had he so chosen, have taken the government of the kingdom into his own hands. A bride, a few days younger than himself, was on her way to France. The double Spanish marriage was arranged, and his sister, the Princess Elizabeth, a child of twelve, was also on her journey to Spain, to marry the Prince of the Asturias, afterwards Philip IV. From the extreme punctiliousness of both the French and the Spaniards on this occasion—the French *grand seigneur* and the Spanish grandee, deputed to exchange the brides, each fearing to compromise the dignity of his nation if he advanced nearer than the other to the frontiers—it seemed likely that the poor children would have to return to their respective nurseries instead of continuing their journey and being married. But at last the exchange was effected, and Anne of Austria was conducted to Paris by her youthful bridegroom. She was a fine tall girl, a Spanish *blonde*, wanting yet two or three summers for the full development of her beauty.

The royal marriages gave occasion for a renewal of those *fêtes* and entertainments in which the queen-regent took as much delight as did her partisans at court or the Parisian people. “*Quadrilles d'Arioste*” were performed in the Place de Carrousel ; Roland, Rénaud de Montauban, and the rest of the characters being represented by *les grands seigneurs*. The *galanterie Castellane* had also its representatives, in compliment to the young queen. Groups, too, of mythological personages came rushing on the scene in enormous triumphal cars drawn by monstrous beasts—some-

thing in the style of a Mardi-gras procession. Their mission was to proclaim to the revellers the astounding feats of *le puissant roi* Louis XIII.—yet to be accomplished, of course, but which were clearly seen to be looming in the distance.

Mars announced him as the conquering hero of the future ; Jupiter, as the mightiest of the mighty rulers of France, and Minerva stepped in to declare that wisdom should guide him when he let loose his thunderbolts. “Glorious Apollo” appeared to tell of his love for, and his enlightened patronage of the arts ; and the chaste huntress—Goddess Diana, to vaunt his prowess in the chase. But when beautiful Venus with her wicked little son drove in, in her sumptuous car—doves and loves without number fluttering around her—she had a victory already achieved to congratulate the youthful but potent monarch upon. Gracefully she waved her hand, and kissed the rosy tips of her fingers as she bent towards *la belle Espagnole*, who, all radiant with delight, sat *en reine* by the side of her gloomy young spouse. She, poor girl, enjoyed the gay and festive scene, the boy-husband was thoroughly bored by it.

But the true hero of it all seemed to be he who had had the largest share in devising these revels, and took a conspicuous part in them—the graceful, smiling Concini. Charles d’Albert—to whom the *maréchal* had just given the governorship of Amboise—drew the young king’s attention to this, and roused his jealousy of the usurper, as he called him, of his power. “Ballets féeriques” were danced at the Louvre by the youthful nobility, who were dressed as fairies, cupids, and angels. Theatrical representations occupied their elders. Marie was exceedingly

fond of plays, and the noise, the movement, the dress and display, the profusion and the lavish expense the celebration of these miserable marriages occasioned were a source of delight and gratification to her.

Masses of the people assembled, and thronged the streets and the open spaces near the palace, to catch a glimpse of the plumes and slashed doublets, the ruffs and the ruffles, the lace-trimmed funnel boots and gold-embroidered *chausses* of the *grands seigneurs*, as well as to admire the pretty painted faces, the frizzy *coiffures*, the feathers and diamonds, the velvets and satins, and fine Venetian point-lace of the *belles dames* of the *haute noblesse*. But far prettier, more interesting, and most novel sight of all was the girl-queen, in her Spanish mantilla, archly smiling, and coquettishly flirting her Moorish fan. She was taken through Paris in a new and finely-painted royal carriage—the queen-mother and the young king accompanying her, and as many courtiers and ladies as the capacious vehicle would accommodate. These revels were the last that Marguérite de France took any part in. She died in the course of the year, aged sixty-three. After her return to France, by Henry's permission, she built a large mansion in the Pré aux Clercs, which had been for ages reserved for the recreation of the students of the various colleges. They rebelled at her appropriation of it, and a serious disturbance was the result. Marguérite lived there in reckless extravagance, causing much scandal. She lighted up her hôtel every night with hundreds of candles, making it quite a brilliant object in dark dirty Paris, where robberies and assassinations were nightly committed with impunity; for the streets had no other lighting than the occasional glimmer of a candle

that some householder put in his window, with good intent, to lighten the footsteps of his neighbors, but whose only effect was to make the darkness more visible. Margu  rite de France kept open h  use at this time, and looked for admiration as in the days of her youth. She was thickly rouged up to the eyes, wore a flowing wig of black hair, and generally an old-fashioned *houppelande* or long gold-braided *casaque*. She and Marie de M  dicis were on excellent terms, and Marie every year paid Margu  rite's debts.

CHAPTER VII.

Revolt of M. le Prince.—Elenora Galagai.—Concini's great Wealth.—"The Accursed Jews."—Assassination of Concini.—His Wife burnt as a Sorceress.—The Queen-regent Exiled.—Armand du Plessis.—Marie's Return.—The Luxembourg.—Rubens' Twenty-four Paintings.—"The Day of Dupes."—Escape of Marie of Brussels.—Richelieu rules France.—Marie in Poverty and Exile.

THE unusual stir and commotion which the royal marriages had occasioned in Paris were taken advantage of by M. le Prince (Henri de Condé) to assemble those of his partizans among the French nobles who were most strongly opposed to the Maréchal d'Ancre, and had determined on his overthrow. But their plot was either ill-timed or ill-conducted, for instead of deposing the Italian, the prince himself was arrested in the Louvre and sent to Vincennes. Others of the party were lodged in the Bastille, or were banished to their châteaux, and Marie and her minister congratulated themselves on this triumph, as they believed it to be, over their foes.

The Prince and Princess de Condé lived by no means on amicable terms. She had resented his forcible removal of her to Brussels to elude the pursuit of Henry IV., whose mad passion had rather flattered her vanity than displeased her. She had then used every means in her power to obtain a divorce, but the prince opposed it, though the mar-

riage had been urged upon him, only that Henry might take his wife from him.

After the king's assassination the prince brought her back to Paris, but their estrangement still continued. A change, however, seems to have come over the feelings of the princess when she heard of her husband's imprisonment, as she requested to be allowed to share his confinement. Her request was granted, and their reconciliation took place at Vincennes.

The wife of the Maréchal d'Ancre was Elenora Galagai. She was the foster-sister of Marie de Médicis, and accompanied her to France on her marriage with Henry. If writers of the time may be relied upon, Elenora was a most repulsively ugly woman ; but it is more likely that her repulsiveness was in her character, and that she was intriguing, artful and haughty, though possessed of powers of mind that gave her great influence over the queen. Marie had a great affection for her, and married her to her secretary, Concini, the more effectually to promote the interests of both favorites. Warned by the increasing dissatisfaction of the nobles, and the loud complaints of the suffering people of the constant imposition of new and burdensome taxes, Elenora and her husband were secretly taking steps for transferring their immense wealth to Italy.

Concini possessed several fine châteaux in the provinces, and two or more in Paris, as well as marquisates with large estates, extensive and productive farms, and flourishing vineyards. All this property he proposed stealthily to turn into specie, and through the agency of some Italian Jews, who were invited by him to settle for a time in Paris, he looked

forward to speedily doing so. "During the seven years of the government of the queen-regent," says a French writer, "Concini had amassed not less than fifteen hundred thousand escudi de Rome, from the sale of public offices and from oppressive taxation."

But the Jews ! The pious were filled with horror, and crossed themselves devoutly at the mention of the word Jew, and the enlightened populace, generally, trembled lest the wrath of Heaven should be wreaked upon them when they learned that the "accursed Jews" were actually among them. An ancient law had banished them from France. The Italian Concini, the oppressor of the people, had brought them back ; that vile race that had denied Jesus Christ ! Outcasts from their country ; wanderers on the face of the earth, condemned for their crime to be a "by-word among the nations," and every man's hand to be against them, "a race leagued with the devil and the powers of darkness, who, in exchange for their souls, had taught them the secret of making gold." Some terrible calamity was looked for. The reliques, the virgins, the saints, all were appealed to, to exorcise the land and deliver France from the malignant influence and presence of the Jews.

It was at this juncture that the favorite of the king saw the desired opportunity of overthrowing the favorite of the queen-regent. It was difficult to make Louis take a resolution, but when taken, as difficult to move him either to change or to modify it. He would never enter into discussion ; but the impediment in his speech may in a great degree account for that. By persistence, however, the favorite Charles d'Albert prevailed on the king, in 1617,

to sign a warrant for the arrest of the Maréchal d'Ancre. His scruples had arisen from filial respect—that feeling so strong in French families of all classes, even where, as in Louis' case, no great affection appears to exist. It was not easy to efface it, or to overcome his boyish fears of exciting the anger of his violent mother by an act of authority that deposed her favorite and took from her the government of the kingdom. But the warrant was signed, and Charles d'Albert was to succeed the maréchal as minister. When arrested Concini resisted, and drew his sword to defend himself. This had been foreseen, and provided for. Five or six daggers were immediately unsheathed, and soon his body, bleeding and mangled, was thrown out to the populace, given up to the barbarities of a mob, more cruel, more revoltingly savage than beasts of prey.

Concini's wife, La Maréchale d'Ancre as she was called, was put on her trial as a sorceress, and for having, with the aid of necromancers and demons, cast a spell over the mind of the queen, and enriched herself and her husband by taking advantage of the infatuated imagination of her royal mistress. La Maréchale seems to have behaved with some dignity when arraigned before the enlightened tribunal commissioned to condemn her and to confiscate the property.

“Is it not true,” said the learned judge—“is it not true, wicked woman, that your influence over the queen-mother was gained by your spells and incantations?”

“It was gained,” she replied, “by that power which strong minds naturally possess over the weak.”

She was, however, condemned. She had been seen to ascend Catherine de Médicis' tower in the Hôtel de Soissons. This was accepted as proof positive of her guilt, and, accordingly, as a sorceress she was beheaded and burnt on the Place de Grève; that famous Place, which for centuries was by turns the scene of the public rejoicings and public executions of Paris—a crowd as great assembling to witness the horrors and sufferings of the latter, as to gaze on the illuminations and fireworks and to join in the dances of the former. The Hôtel de Ville figured no less prominently for upwards of three hundred years in the various commotions and outbreaks of popular fury in Paris; but it was left to the fanatics of the dark days of the commune to destroy that fine edifice and ornament of their city.

The death of the Concini closed the reign of Marie de Médicis. "I have reigned," she said, "for seven years over France; I now look only for a heavenly crown."

On the 4th of May, 1617, she left Paris for the Château de Blois, the place of exile assigned her. She wept bitterly when she found that Barbini, her Intendant du palais, was not allowed to accompany her as she had requested. Louis, on the contrary, had never looked so radiant, so happy, so full of good-humor as on the day of her departure. He was then sixteen.

"*Enfin*," he exclaimed, "*me voici roi!*"

Yet it was merely a *révolution du palais* that had taken place. Charles d'Albert was created Duc de Luynes; the confiscated property of the unfortunate maréchal became his successor's; the valuable jewels of his wife passed into the hands of the young

Duchess de Luynes—the beautiful Mademoiselle Rohan Montbazon, afterwards the celebrated Duchesse de Chevreuse, and who was the first object of Louis' *amours platoniques*. The Concini being dethroned, the Alberti reigned in their stead, and poor Louis XIII. was no more king than before.

Armand du Plessis, Bishop of Luçon, had held the office of secretary under Maréchal d'Ancre, but on the assassination of his patron and the change in the government occurring he retired to Avignon and occupied himself in study and writing. Two years afterwards he was recalled, at the instance of De Luynes, who then ruled France and the king with a very high hand, and on whom all sorts of honors had been heaped, even to that of the distinguished post of Constable of France. Most of the ancient nobility had seceded from the court while the Concini were in the ascendant. De Luynes, to strengthen his position, invited them to return ; he also liberated M. le Prince from Vincennes, in 1619. Two months before, the princess had given birth there to a daughter, Anne Généviève de Bourbon, afterwards the celebrated Duchesse de Longueville, and sister of the Grand Condé who was born in 1621.

Marie de Médicis had escaped from Blois to Angoulême ; but as De Luynes was more disposed to show his power by being grandly gracious towards his enemies, and by conciliatory rather than by crushing measures, he contrived to make overtures of peace that proved acceptable to the queen-mother. The Bishop of Luçon effected a reconciliation between her and the king, and Marie returned to Paris after the signing of the treaty of Brissac.

The building of her palace of Luxembourg had

progressed so rapidly during her absence that it was finished in 1620. It was then the most regular in its architecture of any of the royal residences. Its interior decorations, the cornices, architraves, etc., were the work of the first sculptors of the day, and much of its panelling, destroyed or removed during subsequent alterations, was adorned by the pencil of Poussin or Simon Vouet. The twenty-four large paintings—since transferred to the Louvre—of the chief events in the life of Marie de Médicis were, as is well known, executed by Rubens after the queen's return. Two only were painted in Paris and wholly by the great master himself—that in which Minerva is counselling Henry IV. to take Marie de Médicis for a bride (advice the wisdom of which Henry would scarcely have endorsed), and the one representing the birth of Louis XIII. These two fine paintings have by some connoisseurs been considered the chefs-d'œuvre of the series. The others were sketched by Rubens in Paris, and painted at Antwerp, principally, if not entirely, by his pupils or assistants, with the exception of some finishing touches by the master's hand.

Marie used to sit for hours together conversing with Rubens while he was engaged in painting. She had a great regard for him; and his learning and varied knowledge, as statesman, ambassador, and man of the world, as well as his great skill in his art, were fully appreciated by her.

It has been made a reproach to Marie de Médicis that a proposed second series of paintings, of which the career of Henry IV. was to furnish the subject, was not the first put in hand. Rubens is said to have prepared sketches for these pictures while in

Paris, but that the subsequent misfortunes of his patroness prevented the carrying out of her project. It may, however, be doubted that it was ever entertained.

Most unexpectedly the Duc de Luynes died of camp fever while heading an expedition against the unfortunate Huguenots, and the queen-mother immediately resumed all her old ascendancy over the weak mind of her son. She introduced her *surintendant*, the Bishop of Luçon, into the council, greatly against the wish of the king, who was shocked at the licentiousness of his life.

In 1622 the Bishop of Luçon became Cardinal de Richelieu. Marie, who had proposed to govern the kingdom through him, looked to find him pliant and subservient, as Concini had been. But Richelieu soon found means to possess himself of the whole authority of the crown, to use it, as his admirers say, for the benefit of the state and the glory of France.

The queen-mother, disappointed to find an opponent instead of an ally in the man whose advancement she had zealously promoted, with her usual violence complained of his conduct, and menaced him with the king's displeasure. Being compelled to desist from open antagonism, she joined in plots and intrigues to accomplish his overthrow. Their result to her was humiliation, to some of her accomplices death. After the famous "day of dupes,"* 11th November, 1630, when it was for some hours believed, even by the queen-mother herself, that

* This epithet was applied to it by Maréchal Bassompierre, whose rather *lâche* desertion of De Richelieu on this occasion cost him twelve years' confinement in the Bastille, where he wrote his *Mémoires*.

Richelieu's downfall was accomplished, a secret interview with the king turned the scale in his favor. The Councillor Marillac, with whom Marie was leagued, was arrested and beheaded, and she herself was put under arrest. The choice of a place of exile being allowed her, she selected the Château de Compiègne. All her servants were sent to the Bastille. The plot of Gaston d'Orleans, the king's brother, to excite a civil war for the expulsion of Richelieu was also discovered, and his partizans declared guilty of treason. The brave Duc de Montmorenci was taken prisoner, and by the cardinal's order beheaded at Toulouse.*

The queen-mother, fearing that Vincennes or the Bastille might be her own ultimate destination, escaped from Compiègne and fled to Brussels, where she was at first kindly received and entertained. Paris, which she had adorned with works of art, and which was indebted to her for others of public utility, she was destined to see no more. A stronger hand than Louis' now held the reins of government. Yet the king sanctioned the severities of his minister towards his mother. He was glad to be freed from her domineering influence, but he had no love for Richelieu, and was soon jealous of his power, jealous of the state and splendor with which he surrounded himself ; for the cardinal far excelled the sovereign in outward pomp, in the richness of his equipages and the expensiveness of his establishment. Louis felt the bondage he was held in, but feeble in consti-

* The king declined to accept his confiscated estate of Chantilly. He gave the château, parks, and grounds to the duke's sister, Charlotte de Montmorenci, Princesse de Condé, and thus this fine domain passed into the Condé family.

tution and mentally weak, he was unable to break from the control of the master mind that governed both him and his kingdom.

Richelieu was created a duke, and the king gave him the government of Brittany. But the royal authority was a mere shadow to his. He humbled the haughty nobles, extinguished the liberties of the people, and oppressed the Huguenots. The nation groaned under its heavy burden of taxation, and trembled before its sanguinary administrator.

Poor Marie de Médicis, a wandering exile, without money or friends, dependent on the benevolence of foreigners for shelter and subsistence, though she had never in her day of power and prosperity been very popular, now excited the sympathy and compassion of the people as an oppressed queen, an unhappy and injured mother.

CHAPTER VIII.

Richelieu's Patronage of Literature.—Richelieu, Chapelain, and "Le Cid."—The Rambouillet Circle.—Its Discordant Elements.—Social Savoir-faire of the Marquise.—Depravity of the Court.—The Queen and Madame de Hautefort.—Richelieu and Anne of Austria.—Mademoiselle de La Fayette.—Louis XIII. as a Lover.—An Evening at Rambouillet.—The Fiery Calprenède.—"Le Grand Epistolier."—Cardinal de la Valette.—Eaves-dropping.—"Tel Maître, tel Valet."—Gaston d'Orleans.

THE period which French writers have named "*le grand siècle littéraire*" began with the accession of Cardinal de Richelieu to power. The government of the kingdom with uncontrolled absolute authority was entirely in his hands, and no sort of fame was indifferent to him. The patronage he accorded to literature resulted from no enlightened sympathy with men of letters and their pursuits, but from an undeviating practice of seeking his own exaltation by any and every means that presented itself. To become the recognized patron of men of learning, and especially of the poets, was to enhance his glory while living and to hand down his name to posterity surrounded by a halo of laudatory verse.

But the poets most favored by Richelieu were those who, of the numerous verse-writers of that day, are now even by name scarcely known, and whose works generally have been consigned to oblivion. Richelieu himself made verses, as a distraction from the heavy cares of state, and pretended to a high, if not the highest place amongst his poets

and *gens de lettres*. But he could brook no rivals near his throne ; and as in the government of the kingdom he sent to the Bastille, or the scaffold, all who were obnoxious to him or were obstacles in his path, so in the world of letters he trampled on genius in order to exalt mediocrity in the shape of dramas concocted by himself and his staff of versifiers for representation at the theatre of his own palace.

Jean Chapelain—one of those critics who fail in literature—first obtained favor and temporary fame, and became, as Boileau said, “ *le mieux renté de tous les beaux esprits*,” by an ode addressed “ A son Eminence le Cardinal de Richelieu,” and a critique on “ *Le Cid* ” of le grand Corneille. This chef-d'œuvre of a great genius displeased His Eminence. To depreciate it was a delicate piece of flattery that met with its certain reward. The great cardinal, like many other so-called great men, had vulnerable points open to successful attack from very poor creatures.

The Hôtel de Rambouillet was more impartial in its judgments, and its voice was a powerful one. Its circle was now greatly extended ; not only the celebrated *salon bleu*, which was especially devoted to the reading of new works and conversations on stated subjects, was overflowing with guests, but its spacious neighbor and rival in elegance, the *salon jaune*, and often the whole suite of reception-rooms, was thrown open to them ; so numerous were the *réunions* of the marquise attended. And it was not exclusively a literary coterie, though the *élite* of the *gens de lettres* were present, and obscurely-born genius and rising talent sought and received there welcome and encouragement. Courtiers and ladies

of the highest rank, who could make no pretensions to learning and very little to *esprit*, mingled with the throng ; attracted by the polished ease and general tone of good-breeding that prevailed in the crowded *salons* of Rambouillet, and contrasted so strikingly with the roughness and grossness of the manners of the court.

It was not necessary to produce quarterings of nobility to obtain an introduction to the assemblies of the marquise ; but intelligence, talent, and above all good manners, were indispensable qualifications for that honor. Merit, there, ranked above birth ; *esprit* in itself was reckoned a dignity, and to literature and its professors was accorded a degree of consideration which hitherto the *grande*es of society had rarely, if ever, vouchsafed to them. The Hôtel de Rambouillet served also as a school of manners for the court. The tone of refinement it was necessary to observe there was a protest against the open depravity, both of conduct and speech, which survived in the society of the Louvre, long after the evil example of Henry IV. had ceased to give sanction to it.

The *salons* of Rambouillet afforded, no doubt, many examples of high-flown sentimentality and affectation, as well as of overstrained or stilted politeness. And it has been suspected that before the period of its greatest vogue and importance (from 1635 to 1645) there existed amongst the society that frequented the hôtel, composed as it was of persons of such different social grades, a carefully suppressed undercurrent of mutual disdain. The pride of birth, the pride of intellect, the pride of purse, each received a shock from the presence of the others, and

could not immediately amalgamate, though represented there only by the *élite* of each class. It argues in the hostess the possession of a high degree of tact and social *savoir-faire* to have succeeded so happily in soothing the ruffled spirits of her high and mighty guests, and bringing the discordant elements in her circle to act so favorably on each other as to produce that general tone of good breeding, that courtesy of manner, that suavity of expression—indicating respect for others as well as self-respect—which characterized those who had mixed with the *société polie* of Rambouillet.

From Rambouillet emanated “*le sentiment de toutes les bienséances*,” and a tone of refinement which, with the spread of the social instinct, gradually imbued French society generally. It is one of the glories of that celebrated hôtel that its influence on the manners of the age was felt by all classes and conditions, even to the inferior degrees of the social scale, and has never, through all the changing fortunes of the nation, become wholly extinct. If no great amendment was wrought by its influence on the morals of the age, at least the attempt to reform them was made by inculcating a respect for purity of life, of which the unblemished one of the marquise afforded an example. For a full century—from the time of Francis I. to the end of the reign of Henry IV.—the court and there was no other society) had been deeply plunged in vice. The regency of Marie de Médicis produced no improvement—though no well-substantiated charge of immorality has been brought against *her*. Richelieu’s private life was far from blameless, and though Louis XIII. did not pursue a

depraved career, like his father and his son, his example had no weight whatever, because of his gloomy seclusion, his stern neglect of his wife, his harsh, perhaps unjust, suspicions of her, and their mutual indifference, if not actual dislike.

Louis had read "*Astrée*," and had adopted D'Urfé's system of "*honnête amitié*." Madame de Hautefort, afterwards Duchesse de Schomberg, but who was then one of the queen's *dames d'honneur*, was the object of this tenderly respectful flame, after the Duchesse de Luynes became Duchesse de Chévreuse. Madame de Hautefort was much attached to the queen, and the two ladies seem to have amused themselves greatly at the expense of the king. It was his custom to go daily to the gallery of the Louvre where the queen and her ladies assembled to chatter and laugh and amuse themselves ; for Anne was both desperately ignorant and indolent. She delighted in petty intrigue, and her *laissez-aller* disposition saved her from many mortifications. Louis took no notice whatever of his wife, but sat down at some distance from the group and gazed long and sadly on Madame de Hautefort. The queen, after a time, would bid her "go and talk to him for pity's sake," when he would draw her aside, or beckon her into the deep recess of some window, and there tell her of his amusements ; either of the chase, or of his gardening, and carpentering—for he excelled in these occupations. He was also a good barber, and had recently practised on the gentlemen of his household who wore beards, leaving them only a small tuft of hair on the centre of the chin. This became, and still is as we all know, a fashion in France ; the

tuft of hair, in compliment to the royal barber, being called "*la royale*."*

When these subjects failed, he descanted on the politics of the day, or told his fair *bergère* how many Huguenots his army, by the help of Heaven, had slain. The influence of Madame de Hautefort was very great with the king, but he inspired in her no feeling beyond pity. Ultimately, in her endeavors to serve the queen, she became suspected by the cardinal, and was banished from the court. For Richelieu delighted to humiliate Anne of Austria, because of her haughty rejection of the lover-like advances he had presumed to make towards her, and Madame de Hautefort, as he was aware, had greatly aided her to escape the consequences of her share in a plot or secret correspondence with Spain.

The king did not immediately reconcile himself to the loss of the society of Madame de Hautefort, but the wily cardinal contrived to throw in his way a far more sympathetic young lady—Mademoiselle de La Fayette. She appears to have been really interested in Louis, and even to have felt for him a very warm attachment. He, who is said never to have felt either friendship or love for any one, or to have regarded his greatest favorites as anything more to him than slaves created to contribute to his pleasures and

* This fancy of the king produced several *chansonnettes* which were sung in the streets ; the gentlemen who had undergone the operation being often saluted with :

" Hélas ! ma pauvre barbe,
Qu'es qui t'a faite ainsi ?
C'est le grand roi, Louis,
Troisième de ce nom,
Qui toute a ébarbé sa maison," etc., etc.

amusements, managed to infuse into this new *liaison* a large dash of sentiment. So much, indeed, that momentarily forgetful of the D'Urfé principles upon which he so piqued himself, he proposed to Mademoiselle de La Fayette to share with him his château of St. Germain, that they might there live for each other alone.

La belle demoiselle was alarmed, and resolved to seek refuge in a convent from the friend who had become her lover. His entreaties prevailed not to shake her resolution, and Vincent de Paul, who was the king's spiritual director, used every argument to confirm her in it. Fearing ill consequences from delay, he urged on her the necessity of at once acting on her resolve, and obtained permission to conduct her himself to the Carmelites. There Louis visited her ; for convent gates were not closed to the kings of France. It was their royal prerogative to enter any of the religious houses whenever they would. And Louis availed himself of it to talk to the fair penitent for hours together of politics and affairs of state. She had fled from a phantom. The proposal at which virtue took alarm, was uttered under the influence of a feeling that passed away when the words that gave expression to it were spoken. But lest there should be any revival, Father Vincent kept a vigilant eye on the sentimental friends. He remonstrated, too, with the king, on the scandal likely to arise from his passing so much of his time in a nunnery ; and at length he prevailed on Mademoiselle de La Fayette, still in her noviciate, to refuse to receive his visits, and to delay not her full profession as a nun.

When, in 1631, Marie de Médicis was finally banished from the court, many of the *fêtes* and other

gaeties she had introduced there were banished also. The *tristesse* that ensued caused a great influx of new visitors at the Hôtel de Rambouillet. There the *grands seigneurs* and *grandes dames*, though they found fewer noisy amusements and less boisterous mirth, yet met with new subjects of interest. And as novelty is always attractive, the court was almost deserted, except by those whose attendance was obligatory.

It was a warm evening in the genial month of May. The wide doors that separated the suite of *salons* were removed from their hinges ; the long windows thrown open. Outside each of them was a large basketful of sweet-scented flowers, placed on a low stand. Some of the company, allured by the beauty of the evening, were promenading in the garden. A numerous circle had assembled in the one vast saloon, as it then appeared to be ; the Venetian mirrors at either end reflecting, and repeating the reflection, *ad infinitum*, of the lighted lamps and the moving groups of guests. Jean Louis Balzac was there, and Chapelain—he was considered an oracle, then ; alas for his reputation, that he published those first six books of his terrible “Pucelle.” There was Pierre Corneille—no “Cid,” as yet—and young Gaultier de la Calprenède, just venturing to try his skill in a long romance after the D’Urfé fashion. Calprenède was “*un gentilhomme de l’antichambre du roi*”—a Gascon, fiery and impetuous, with his hand ever on his sword-hilt, ready at any hour to unsheathe his weapon and to defend his works *à toute outrance*.

Calprenède had written a short dramatic piece which had been submitted to His Eminence, who had greatly dispraised it, and said that the least of its

faults was that it was written in "*vers lâches*." At the word "*lâches*," Calprenède fired up, as if at a personal insult. "*Cadédis !*" he exclaimed, clapping his hand on his sword, "*comment lâches ? il n'y a jamais eu rien de lâche dans la maison de la Calprenède !*" His Eminence did not, as might have been expected, reply "Off with his head," as he would willingly have done to another Buckingham, who, like himself, had ventured to look with eyes of loving admiration on the pious coquette, Anne of Austria.

But to return to the *salon bleu*. A learned conversation was going on, in which Balzac was the chief speaker. He was arguing for the adoption into the French language of the word *urbanité*. It was not then French ; and, indeed, the thing signified had until lately been almost a stranger in the land. But it had found a home at Rambouillet, and it was just and fit that its naturalization in France should be accomplished there by its sanction of the word best suited to describe it.

Jean Louis Balzac was eloquent, both as a writer and speaker, but in a style too sonorous, too Johnsonian. Some one has irreverently spoken of it, as "*la langue française à la torture*." His early correspondence with Madame de Rambouillet, on the Romans and their history, is in a high degree stilted and inflated. But Balzac had become sensible of this defect, and resolved to correct it. Prose writers who used the mother tongue were few : consequently there were no approved French models to form a style upon. Idyls, sonnets, and odes ; chansons, and chansonnettes, and short versified *pièces de théâtre*, sufficed to make a literary reputation ; and in them the witty and epigrammatic spirit of the nation was clearly

enough apparent, but not the force and beauty of the language. Very few, indeed, were thoroughly acquainted with it. Amongst these few Balzac, "*le grand épistolier*," was chief. He had secluded himself for some years, and devoted them exclusively to the study of language and the improvement of his style. The purity and elegance with which the French tongue was spoken and written later on in the seventeenth century, are in a great measure due to Balzac. He was also the first who excelled in epistolary writing.

The literary men assembled at this date (1631) in the *salons* of Rambouillet are all young—Balzac, who is thirty-nine, is a veteran amongst them.* Only the historian Vaugelas is his senior ; unless the great cardinal's poet and humble servant, Boisrobert, be honored with a place among *les gens de lettres*. Boisrobert was at the hôtel, on the occasion above referred to, in the quality of political spy. He was commissioned to keep a watchful eye on all that was done, and an open ear to all that was said by Madame la Princesse de Condé (sister of the Duke de Montmorenci) and the Cardinal de la Valette, Richelieu's brother, and like himself a soldier-priest. La princesse, in a cosy arm-chair, and well out of earshot of the learned conversation of the *littérateurs* and *les dames savantes*, is in close confidential confabulation with the cardinal, who is seated on a low stool, drawn up very close to the arm-chair of the princess.

* The old poet Malherbe had died three years before, and Ogier de Gombauld, whose pension of 1200 écus was reduced to 400 francs, did not often appear. The marquise frequently and anonymously relieved his distress, and furnished him with respectable clothing for his occasional visits.

(It may be observed here, *en passant*, that the cardinal is the recognized "*honnête homme*" of Madame la Princesse, according to the rules of the establishment, to be referred to by and by.)

Most provokingly, Boisrobert sees that much is being said, but not a syllable reaches his ear; and he is too well known to venture to approach and dexterously to glide into or interrupt the conversation. The buzz and the hum of voices around Balzac, the occasional ting-tang of a lute in the music-room, and the twittering of that pretty spinet, are all in league with these earnest talkers, whose *confidences* at last come to an end with a laugh that to Boisrobert's ears has a derisive sound, but makes him no wiser as to the subject of the discourse. This he reported to his master, who forthwith despatched the wily Père Josephe, to say to the marquise that His Eminence suspected his brother and Madame la Princesse of carrying on intrigues with the Spanish Court, where the Marquis de Rambouillet was then ambassador, and that he desired, therefore, to know all that was said by them in her *salon* on the subject of Spanish affairs.

The marquise replied, "she did not believe that Cardinal de la Valette and the princess were engaged in any intrigues on the subject; but, if they were, that His Eminence must excuse her from playing the part of spy on those who frequented her *salons*."

Richelieu had already deprived Rambouillet of one of the most lively of its *preux chevaliers*—the Maréchal de Bassompierre, who had too prematurely rejoiced over the supposed downfall of the minister. Le maréchal's courtly and chivalric devotion to the fair sex had made Bassompierre and gallantry almost

synonymous terms. His valet, who had lived with him many years, aspired to similar renown, and had fully established his reputation as a squire of dames ; the proverb "*Tel maître, tel valet,*" is said to have been first applied to this gallant knight and his trusty squire. Vincent Voiture was another absentee. When in Paris, he lived so constantly at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, that he was familiarly called the "*Voiture de l'Hôtel.*" He was attached to the household of Gaston d'Orleans, the king's brother, who was then in Lorraine, having failed in his plots against the cardinal, and abandoned his friends, who now suffered for his pusillanimity.

Gaston was the father of the celebrated Grande Mademoiselle. At this time she was about five years of age. Her mother, who had died in giving birth to her, was the beautiful Mademoiselle de Montpensier, heiress to the immense wealth of the House of Guise, and also allied to the crown. Louis XIII., though he had neither affection nor respect for Anne of Austria, was extraordinarily jealous of any attentions that were paid to her, even by his boy-brother whom he hated. He suspected them of conspiring together to dethrone him, with a view of then marrying and usurping his authority. Gaston was therefore compelled to take a wife ; and, much against his will, married the young and beautiful bride Louis found for him. She died the following year. Gaston afterwards married one of the princesses of the house of Lorraine ; pleasing himself in his second marriage, and thereby sorely displeasing the king.

CHAPTER IX

Boisrobert.—M. le Prince.—The Mysterious Oublieuse.—Her Lute and her Song.—La Belle Angélique Paulet.—Her Music and Dancing.—The Jealous Nightingales.—A Presumptuous Bourgeois.—Patriotism, Religion, and Love.—A Noble Lover.—Galants et Honnêtes Hommes.—Social Supremacy of Woman.

THE great cardinal, after 1630, no longer frequented the *salons* where so many were welcomed whom he regarded either as his literary rivals or political foes. Had he ventured to do so, he would have met there also, in the course of the next few years, some bitter personal enemies in the representatives of those families, several of whose members had been sent by him to the scaffold. His favorite and secretary, as well as literary *protégé*, Boisrobert—a man of some wit and much pleasantry, and who was also fond of the society of men of letters—kept a watchful eye open on the company for him. Madame la Princesse he now suspected of intriguing with Spain; a few years later on, he knew that she abhorred the man whom she regarded as the murderer of her brother, Montmorenci. But the enmity of Monsieur le Prince—who, though extremely wealthy, was extremely parsimonious and avaricious—was greatly modified by the gift of his brother-in-law's confiscated estate of Chantilly. His three years' sojourn at Vincennes had also had a subduing effect both on his resentment and his courage.

Richelieu had no persistent enemy in him. But even

then, 1631, he desired to repress the mutinous spirit, and to alienate from the court the youth who stood beside the Prince de Condé listening to Balzac. This youth of eighteen was the Prince de Marsillac (de La Rochefoucauld of "Les Maximes"). Like many others of the company who did not join in the conversation of the literary circle, they had been drawn away from it by the sound of music, which now and then reached them faintly from a distance, yet not from the music-room. It was the sound of a lute, very skilfully played.

The performer was a woman. She stood outside the open window at the extreme end of the suite of *salons*. The dense foliage of a large tree threw a deep shadow over her, and she seemed to avoid every flickering ray of light which, as the guests from time to time moved, fell on the pathway from the lamps of the *salons*. "*C'est une oublieuse,*" said one of the ladies, as the woman approached the window, and, curtsying gracefully, placed before the audience her music had drawn thither a large Flemish basket, decorated with red ribands, and filled with wafer-cakes, or *oubliettes*, then hastily drew back. Curiosity was piqued. The night was clear and starlight, and it was perceived that although her dress was of the fashion of the class she represented, like her basket, it was unusually natty and coquettish.

The short linen petticoat was looped up with red ribands and very jaunty bows; her "*calle,*" or coif, which was rather ample, as if for concealment, was also bordered and tied with ribands of the same color. She was neither barefooted nor shod with heavy *sabots*, but wore colored stockings with elaborately-worked clocks, and pretty shoes, with the bands,

bows, and heels *à la* Louis Treize, or as they should rather be called, *à la* Anne d'Autriche, as she introduced them from Spain.

"*Dieu ! quelle jolie main blanche et potelée !*" said young Marsillac, as the mysterious "*oublicuse*" struck a full chord with a firm and practised hand, and played the air of a *chanson*, by Malherbe, then greatly in vogue.

"Why not sing it?" said Julie d'Angennes. "It is one of Angélique Paulet's favorite songs. I must ask mamma," she continued, "who this stranger woman is."

Madame de Rambouillet protested she did not know, and that inquiry must be made how she got into the grounds.

"*C'est une laideron,*" said Monsieur le Prince, "or she'd show us her face."

"*Peut-être une empoisonneuse,*" whispered another to a little group of ladies who were admiring the Flemish basket and eating the *oubliettes*.

This remark caused some commotion, so general was the dread and suspicion of poison in those days. But all this time the lute went ting-tang, ting-tang, merrily on. At the word "poison" a little low laugh seemed to issue from the coif, and the mysterious personage stepped forward, drew back her basket, and placed it by her side. Again she struck her lute, and began the same air ; but there was a general demand for the words. Nothing daunted, she advanced more directly in front of the window, as if to face her audience, preluded a little, then began her song in a rich, full, sweet voice, that sympathetically thrilled through every auditor. "*Mais, c'est Angélique ! c'est Angélique !*" was the general

exclamation. The coif of the *oublieuse* fell, and revealed Mademoiselle Paulet to her friends and admirers.*

“When that great king,” says Mademoiselle de Scudéry, speaking of Henry IV., “gave what he called his heart to any *belle fille* of the queen’s court, it was always injurious to her reputation.” And so it proved to Angélique Paulet’s, though when Henry’s last visit was paid to Angélique on the morning of his death, she was but in her seventeenth year. Her father is said to have been by no means unwilling to obtain lucrative and responsible posts through the favor enjoyed by his daughter, while her mother, a handsome woman of low birth, who died shortly before the assassination of the king, was so constantly engaged in intrigue, that she entirely neglected her, and gave her over from childhood to the charge of servants.

Angélique at an early age became an orphan, with a disputed inheritance, of which the laws (then in a most unsatisfactory state) gave her only a portion, after some years of litigation. Madame de Rambouillet had had a great regard for her as a young girl, and desired to welcome her to her hôtel; but the blemish on her reputation must first be effaced, and “*il fallait*,” says a French writer, “*du temps pour la laisser purger*.” During that time she resided with the Comtesse de Clermont d’Entragues, a woman of great distinction and very high character. Under

* This is not an imaginary scene. It took place at the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Mademoiselle Paulet appears to have been fond of assuming these disguises, and to have introduced the practice amongst the ladies of Rambouillet.

her auspices Mademoiselle Paulet was received at the Hôtel de Rambouillet.

She excelled in dancing—the fashionable accomplishment of the day—and as a vocalist and skilful performer on the *théorbe* and lute she had no rival. Music was scarcely studied at all in France at that time, and Angélique's simple airs, sung with natural taste, and a full, sweet voice, no doubt enraptured her hearers. There must have been some real charm in those exquisite notes that held her listeners spell-bound. The poetic anecdote invented to convey an idea of their beauty seems to bear evidence of it. She is said to have been singing to her lute in a part of the gardens frequented by nightingales, and that two of these feathered songsters left the trees and perched on the edge of a fountain to listen. As she continued warbling on, now in a full, rich strain, now soft, subdued, and tender, the listening birds strove at times to emulate her tuneful ditty. In vain, in vain—their heavenly gift of song is gone. Still they listen, jealous, despairing, yet entranced. But when the sweet strain ceased, the nightingales drooped and died !

So highly was she esteemed at Rambouillet, that on the occasion of her first visit to the hôtel, the marquise sent a troop of the prettiest girls of the place, as well as those of her own household, to meet her at the entrance on the Rambouillet domain. Their dresses were wreathed with flowers, and one of the girls, selected as the prettiest, carried an ornamental basket, containing the keys of the *château*. These, on bended knee, she presented to the much-honored visitor, who, as she passed over the draw-bridge, was saluted also by the firing of the two

small cannon. She is described as exceedingly pretty, with a brilliant complexion, golden hair, and graceful figure. In the little drawing-room dramas that were performed at Rambouillet, either in a small theatre or fitted-up *salon*, Mademoiselle Paulet—dressed as a nymph—was accustomed to dance and sing between the acts. This performance being substituted for “the usual interlude of the hired violins.”

Angélique was no longer in her *première jeunesse*. In 1631 she was full thirty-seven. Tallemant des Réaux, a constant frequenter of Rambouillet, says she was called “*la lionne, à cause de ses yeux vifs, ses cheveux roux, sa fierté et courage.*” He adds that the prudery of this lioness was excessive, insupportable ; and that some three years before she shook her mane violently, and roared with anger when a rich *marchand linger* of the neighborhood presumed to fall in love with her, and to hire a band of serenaders to sing *chansonnettes amoureuses*, and to play the lute and violin beneath her windows. The presumption *de cet animal là*, when, on the return of the king from the siege of Rochelle (the *marchand* was “*capitaine de son quartier*”), he drew up his men, all decked with green ribands—green being a color affected by the fair one—and saluted her with a salvo of musketry, excited her boundless indignation.

But the fair Angélique was compelled to smooth her brow, and if not to smile graciously on the gallant *marchand linger*, at least not to frown very much upon him. For it came into his mind to celebrate the cardinal's triumph at Rochelle by a *fête*, at which he prayed all the wealthy and great of his *quartier* to condescend to assist. He possessed a

good house, with a fine garden ; was decidedly a man of substance, and doubtless of some influence, though the historian of the Hôtel de Rambouillet does not give his name. At all events the marquise approved his idea, and with her daughter and some of the ladies of her society—amongst them Mademoiselle Paulet—condescendingly graced the festive scene with her presence.

In thus honoring a rich linen-draper, the marquise, in her quality of *grande dame*, believed that she encouraged in persons of his class the patriotic fervor and religious enthusiasm at the discomfiture of the Huguenots of Rochelle, of which her *protégé* seemed to set so praiseworthy an example. But *les beaux yeux* of Mademoiselle Paulet on this occasion influenced the gallant *bourgeois* far more potently than either patriotism or religious zeal. She was the queen to whom he would willingly have sworn fealty ; she was the goddess at whose shrine he would have worshipped. But his ardent loyalty and devotion, poor fellow, received a check, and it is to be hoped an effectual cure, in the scorn with which they were repelled.

Had not a king sighed for Mademoiselle Angélique ? Had not two princes of Lorraine worn her charms ? One, indeed—the Duc de Chévreuse—had half ruined himself in the purchase of diamonds, and pearls of great price for the adornment of charms that needed no fictitious aids to enhance them. But the lady was not, it appears, duly affected by the munificence of this lover. Much annoyed, and repenting of his lavish expenditure, he determined to repossess himself of the jewels, which were enclosed in a richly ornamented casket. He did not

request their return, but hearing that she had for some reason confided them, until the proceedings respecting her property were concluded, to the care of a person named Decoudrais, the prince employed a man in his service to abstract them ; and he succeeded in doing so, probably with the connivance of the friend into whose charge they were given. But Mademoiselle Paulet had yet a numerous train of lovers—" *amants inoffensifs*," a contemporary writer calls them—and the chief of them was *le bel esprit*, Vincent Voiture.

In the Rambouillet society, every gentleman was bound to be the lover, or *galant et honnête homme*, of one or other of the ladies. He was to be the devoted slave of his mistress—something after the manner of the knights of the heroic age, combined with the sentimentality of the Strephons and Florimels of D'Uréf and Calprenède, though with more punctiliousness than the swains of the Gascon romancer affected in their social relations with their nymphs. He must blend with knightly honor and gallantry the simplicity of Arcadia and the courtesy of high breeding ; while the lady of whom he was the humble servant and respectful adorer graciously tempered the stateliness of a high-born Mandane with a dash of the tenderness of a Phyllis.

Manners so constrained and artificial as to appear utterly ludicrous were, however, but a protest against the extreme laxity and grossness of the court, and the thorough demoralization of society produced by its example—just as the ignorance of the illiterate *grands seigneurs* was reprovèd by the reception at Rambouillet—*pair à pair* with the first nobles of the land—of the *gens de lettres* they were inclined to contemn.

And they were received with even greater distinction, for no patronage or influence could purchase a welcome for them ; their talents, learning, and wit were the titles that procured them respect. “ *Les grands,*” says Roederer, “ *s’étonnèrent un moment de cette égalité ; mais ils s’y firent.*”

It is probable that for some time the literary element, with its learned conversations and discussions, contributed more towards the improvement of the French language than the refinement of manners ; for the poets and men of letters sprang for the most part from the ranks of the people, or from the *bourgeoisie*, who availed themselves of the opportunities the collegiate schools afforded to studiously-disposed youths of acquiring learning. Roughnesses, however, would soon be toned down in that stately society, and wit and genius, with their odes, their idyls, and epistles to the ladies, aid in establishing the social supremacy of woman in France—first achieved at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, and still so generally maintained.

CHAPTER X.

The Urbanity Question.—Printed Discourses and News-letters.—The *Mercur*e and *Gazette de France*.—Romances of D'Urfé and Calprenède.—A Rival in the Field.—Madeleine de Scudéry.—Georges de Scudéry.—Julie d'Angennes.—Madeleine at Rambouillet.—Madeleine as a Poetess.—The Plays of Georges de Scudéry.—Georges a Virtuoso.—An Address to the Gentle Reader.—Success of "Le Prince Déguisé."—Georges popular at Rambouillet.

THE "urbanity question," like many of a similar nature discussed at Rambouillet, was considered an important one. The conversation respecting it ended in a unanimous vote that "*urbanité* take a permanent place in the French vocabulary." The pros and the cons were noted down; for as the literary part of the Rambouillet circle had not assembled in full force that evening, a *résumé* of the discussion was required for the absent members. Sometimes, when the subject discussed was of unusual interest, the conversations upon it were printed, and forwarded to those friends and acquaintances who resided mostly at their provincial *châteaux*. In this habit of reporting the conversations of the *salons*, literary or otherwise, originated many of those epistolary writings of the seventeenth century since collected and published. They were the conversations of parted friends and relations—the interchange of opinions on topics of interest and the passing events of the day, of which no information would have

reached the provinces but for the facile pens of diligent letter-writers.

And very welcome those printed discourses and budgets of news must have been in those days of literary famine and undeveloped newspaper press ; far more so than is now the arrival of a box of new books from Mudie's at a dull country house, empty of guests, and on a rainy day. There were no magazines even then, except those that contained the state's powder. No daily or weekly chronicle of the follies, the vices, the crimes, the amusements, the miseries of all grades of society all the world over ; no Wednesday, Friday, or Saturday reviews, to give the idle and busy the pith of a big book in a nut-shell, and save them the trouble of reading and of forming opinions for themselves ; no *Gazette of Fashion* and *World of Elegance* to describe to *les dames provinciales* the latest *modes parisiennes* ; in fact, none of the present thousand and one vehicles of good, bad, and indifferent literary food, and few—very few—of the amusements, distractions, and so-called pleasures of life that to so many make life now scarcely endurable.

There was Renaudot's *Mercur*e and there was the *Gazette de France*, for which Louis himself wrote bulletins of the war ; for a war, either foreign or civil and religious, was always on hand, and frequently both. But these puny sheets contained no court circular ; no births, marriages, and deaths ; no agony column ; no "fashionable intelligence" of marriages on the *tapis*, or marriages dissolved ; of the comings and goings of the *haute volée* to their places and mansions in country or town, or for runs round the world ; no lists of the shoals of inmates filling the marine

mansions and grand hotels ; none, indeed, of the innumerable trivialities concerning the world's doings in general, and which are now fully chronicled for the particular edification of those who deem it necessary and important to be duly and correctly informed of them.

With none of these resources of the present day to fall back upon for small talk, the discussions of the Hôtel de Rambouillet on language, or on the merits of a new book, formed themes of conversation both instructive and interesting for those families who, from political or economical motives, rarely visited the capital ; and thus, though residing at a distance from it, they shared in some degree the advantages of those who formed part of that *société d'élite*, as well as helped to further its principal objects—the perfecting of the French tongue, the spreading of a taste for polite literature, and the cultivation of refinement of manners as a first step towards an improvement in the morals of the age.

In this way D'Urfé's fame was, as it were, advertised and spread far and wide ; and still more so that of his successor, Calprenède, who, though keeping on the borders of Arcadia, contrived to endow his heroes with a more chivalric spirit than those of D'Urfé. His impetuous knights, distressed princesses in disguise, sighing swains, and faithless fair ones, pass through a series of adventures truly astonishing. But, extravagant as they are, Calprenède brings all his personages well through their troubles ; some, perhaps, when their worst trials beset them, are reduced to such straits by their constancy and heroism, that, with Francis I. (who had

no honor to lose), they might triumphantly exclaim, "*Tout est perdu sauf l'honneur !*"

Calprenède's eight quarto volume romances met with the most signal success. They found a welcome in every *château* in the kingdom, and were read with avidity. Edition succeeded edition, until the author could satisfy the eager demand of both town and country readers for another long history of the sentimental gallantries of shepherd life, and imaginary feats of chivalry. The ludicrous improbability of his stories seems to have been no bar to their popularity. It may, indeed, have been one cause of it, for the Gascon romancer was reproached only for brevity. Yet each of his volumes, of eight hundred to a thousand well-filled pages, contained not less than six of the modern three-hundred-paged volumes. They were published singly, as they were written—one or two in the course of a year—and as they abounded in episodes, romance within romance, a great fault in itself, yet suspense was not so agonizing as if the whole interest of the work had been centred in two or three of its characters. But a rival of more cultured mind, more fertile brain, and less extravagant fancy, and who held a more facile pen, was shortly to eclipse the fame of Calprenède; this rival was Madeleine de Scudéry.

Amongst the ladies who frequented the Hôtel de Rambouillet, none, in her day, attained greater literary celebrity than Mademoiselle de Scudéry. Born in 1607, she lived to 1701, nearly a whole century, entering very early on a literary career, and pursuing it until quite an advanced age. Many of the changes which occurred in the language during that period, in its orthography, in the adoption of certain

forms of expression and the rejection of others, were either originated by her, or owed their reception to her sanction or her use of them. If it be permitted to employ the term "representative women," Made-moiselle de Scudéry of all contemporary female writers has the strongest claim, both from her length of years and the number and success of her works, to be named the representative of the polite literature of the seventeenth century, as approved at Rambouillet.

The Hôtel de Rambouillet was then more of a court than the Louvre. Not to be received there was equivalent to being outside the pale of good society. Introductions to the marquise were anxiously sought for. To have but once spent an evening in the famous *salon bleu* amongst the *beaux esprits*, the *littérateurs*, the rank and fashion, the wealth and beauty of the capital, was to have achieved an envied social distinction. To obtain it was an inducement to gifted youth, poor in purse and lowly born, to persevere in the acquirement of learning, of artistic skill, or excellence in whatever branch of literature or the arts they might be pursuing.

Madeleine de Scudéry and her brother Georges, who was six years her senior, first visited Rambouillet in 1622, at the special invitation of the marquise. Georges was then twenty-one, and a lieutenant of the Gardes du Roi—Madeleine but fifteen. Both were already known for their poetical talents. Left orphans at an early age, they had been brought up by a maternal uncle, who gave Madeleine the same education as her brother; Latin and Greek forming part of their studies. Notwithstanding his six years' seniority, Georges had acquired less of the dead lan-

guages than his sister, who was far more studiously inclined. She was an eager reader of romances, of works on theology, on agriculture, or any subject, in fact, that her uncle's miscellaneous collection of books gave her an opportunity of obtaining a knowledge of. This uncle seems to have been a good sort of genial old bachelor. Not rich, but living thoroughly at his ease in Paris ; enjoying the company of the *beaux esprits*, doing his best for his adopted children, rather spoiling little Madeleine, whose vivacity and *espièglerie* amused him, and at his death leaving his small property to them.

Georges and Madeleine were both born at Havre, where their parents had settled, though they were of a good old Provençal family. Madeleine, on the death of her uncle, found a protectress in Madame de Rambouillet. Amiable in disposition, full of talent, well educated, well born, well bred, but scantily provided for, the marquise thought Madeleine de Scudéry a desirable companion for her eldest daughter Julie. The young girls were of nearly the same age, and became greatly attached to each other. Some writers have described Julie as "*excessivement jolie*," others have dwelt upon her mental gifts and pleasing manners. But *jolie* was not usually employed in the seventeenth century to express beauty of person ; it meant something more, and, as applied to Julie d'Angennes, that she was a charming girl, though probably not regularly beautiful.

Of Madeleine de Scudéry we are told more precisely, "*qu'elle possédait toutes les charmes, sauf celle de la beauté physique*." Poor girl, she had been robbed of her beauty by that terrible scourge of those days—smallpox. Happily she was not of sufficient con-

sideration in the world to be obliged to hide her scarred features in a convent, and fritter away her great mental gifts in the debasing pettinesses of the purposeless life of a cloistered nun. Madeleine was not exactly domiciled at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, though she passed much of her time there. She noted down the conversations on the various subjects proposed for discussion ; not in the exact words of the speakers, but rather as a condensed report of their opinions and the result arrived at—for they were written after the conversation had closed. Only by sustained attention and an excellent memory could she have accomplished her task. And no doubt to this frequent exercise of both were owing that ease and ability with which, when in after years she wrote ten-volume romances, the long conversations of her characters were carried on. Dialogue was one of her chief excellences. The conversations on moral subjects were separated from the works that contained them and published as models of their kind, and most successfully, long after her death.

But during the period now referred to, 1622 to 1632, Mademoiselle de Scudéry did not write romances. She wrote, as was the fashion with those who had ability, and indeed with many who had not, numberless short pieces of poetry. They are remarkable for delicacy of sentiment, a happy turn of thought, and finish, and correctness in expression that might claim an honorable niche for her amongst the poets of the day. But the fame of her novels entirely eclipsed that of her poems. They were, however, sufficiently appreciated to obtain for her the appellation of Sappho. This became her "*nom de Parnasse*" at Rambouillet, and she was familiarly

known and addressed by it to the end of her life. Mademoiselle de Scudéry was one of those charming persons occasionally met with, whose excellent qualities of heart and mind command esteem, and in whom plainness of feature is obliterated by the goodness and intelligence that beam in the countenance and secure admiration denied to mere beauty. For notwithstanding the want of it in her face, her amiability, graceful figure and *distinguée* manners inspired in her youth more than one *grande passion*, and the number of her friends might be reckoned by that of her acquaintances.

Georges de Scudéry, though his fame has been less enduring than his sister's, was by no means deficient in talent. In his day he was regarded as the rival of Corneille, and his plays had immense success. Some portions of "Le Cid" were attributed to his pen, and many parts of his own dramas were considered to possess so much poetic beauty that the author of "Le Cid" might have been proud to acknowledge them. It was never asserted during his life that Corneille assisted Scudéry. But a French writer of more recent date has seemed to imply it in the remark that in Scudéry's verses there is "*un souffle de Corneille*." It is more than probable that Georges de Scudéry would have rejected the aid of Corneille—for he had a very high opinion of his own abilities. He was as boastful and almost as ready as Calprenède to draw his sword in defence of his works, and to avenge any implied slur on his literary reputation.

That there was more than *un souffle de Madeleine* in them, no one doubted. The jealous Calprenède once asserted that the dedications and prefaces alone belonged to Georges, and these two fiery gentlemen

crossed swords in consequence. But it is certain that she greatly assisted him in his literary work. Whatever she wrote herself was published in his name, even when it was fully understood that she was the author. The brother and sister lived together, and she not only corrected his writings but corrected his conduct, and played in many respects the *rôle* of Providence to him. For Georges was a very fine gentleman, a dashing officer of La Garde Royale, with very little money and very expensive tastes.

He collected *virtù*, and had contracted the tulip mania to such a degree that he was content to ruin himself to obtain a scarce bulb. He was fond of pictures, and contrived to get together a gallery of interesting portraits. The talents of his sister he estimated as highly as his own, and compelled her to make diligent use of them. It was his habit to lock her in her study for a certain number of hours daily, allowing no visitors to have access to her. Between them they earned a large sum by the pen, and though Georges spent the income of both, as well as nearly the whole of their literary gains besides his pay as an officer of the Guards, he was never free from debt. Three times Madeleine was on the eve of marriage, but Georges always stepped in and opposed it. In two instances they were desirable matches, advantageous to her in every respect. Her brother's opposition therefore can only be accounted for by crediting him with selfish motives; yet Georges had always the reputation of being a man of the most chivalric sentiments, the very soul of honor, though *un peu fanfaron*. He was supposed to write only for his amusement, and was fond of making this known in

prefaces and dedications addressed to "L'Ami Lecteur." In one of these prefaces he says :

"If I write, it is because I have nothing better to do, and my only object in writing is to amuse and please myself. So far from being mercenary, the printers and players will bear me witness that I have not asked them to buy, even when I might have expected them to pay. My gentle readers will readily pass over any faults they detect, which may have escaped me, when they learn that I have spent more years in camps than hours in my study, that I have burnt more matches in firing the arquebuse than in lighting candles, so that I better know how to range soldiers in order of battle than words in their proper places, and to square a battalion than to round a period."

Notwithstanding this affectation of writing for amusement, Georges de Scudéry's literary labor was substantially rewarded, and deservedly so. For his dramatic pieces were highly successful, and excited the envy and rage of Richelieu's company of poets. One of his pieces was played at the cardinal's theatre, and proved more attractive than any that had preceded it. Another, "*Le Prince déguisé*," was played at the Court Theatre in the Louvre and at several other places. It appears to have had, what was unusual in those days for a short, slight piece of pleasantry, a very long run. Wherever, and however often it was played, all who could obtain admission ran after it. It formed, for a considerable time, the delight of the court. The queen was charmed with it ; all Paris talked of it ; whole stanzas were often quoted, and at Rambouillet the ladies knew it almost by heart.

No wonder that Georges de Scudéry, who was so well inclined to mount a high pedestal, should consider that he was justified in the good opinion he entertained of himself by the success he met with, and the reward it brought him ; if not in direct payment, in valuable presents, and, what he liked fully as well, an overwhelming amount of flattering compliments. He was a favorite at Rambouillet, where he basked in the sunshine of ladies' smiles as a pleasant scapegrace, a charming fellow. But he had not Chaplain's talent of putting money in his purse and keeping it there. Yet could he have devoted himself to sounding the praises of the great cardinal as much as he delighted to sound his own, he might have acquired places and pensions, and have had money enough and to spare for the full gratification of his expensive horticultural and artistic tastes. It is, however, pleasing to meet with a literary man who was also a poor one, and who yet could refrain from bowing down and kissing the dust, and offering the incense of flattery before the tyrannical dispenser of court favors.

CHAPTER XI.

The Plague of 1631.—Terror of the People.—Wretched State of the City.—The Château de St. Germain.—A Royal Cook.—The Queen and her Ladies.—Anne and Louis at Thirty Years of Age.—The Rage for Dancing.—Richelieu's ostentatious Pomp.—The Regulation of Costume.—Mortification of the Noblesse.—The Right Divine.—The Plague at Rambouillet.—A Miracle.

IN 1631, Paris—which in the preceding year had been wasted by famine, and desolated by fire that had destroyed the sacristy of the Sainte Chapelle and injured several of its public buildings—was visited by one of those terrible outbreaks of plague, whose fearful ravages during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries so frequently thinned its population. When it became known that this fatal scourge was again among them, every heart was appalled, and dread of the disease had almost as many victims as the disease itself. How many, trembling for their own lives and the lives of those dearest to them, watched in agony for the first appearance of the dreaded plague-spot in their families! How many, made cruel and heartless by the sight of this supposed sure sign of the grasp of death upon their loved ones, fled—precipitately fled—to escape from it themselves, leaving parents, husband, wife, to sink, uncared for and alone, under the relentless hand of the grim destroyer—*la peste!*

La peste! No word signifying death to the victim of the disease it represents was ever so fraught with

terror as this. Stout hearts that would have braved death in any other form quailed before it, and tenderest ones were turned to stone. It was not simply death they feared, but the horrors of *la peste*, the heart-sickening horrors with which imagination invested it as preceding death. The rich and noble generally sought safety in their provincial *châteaux*; some few, trusting to their walled mansions and gardens, were content with this isolation, and the cutting off all means of communication with the outer world. The people who dwelt in the narrow, pestiferous streets of the city thronged to the churches, and on all sides Heaven was implored to remove its chastening hand from ungodly but repentant Paris.

There was neither willingness nor sufficient intelligence in the people to see a remedy for the evil in the introduction of more air, light, and space into the streets of the uncleanly city. They preferred to attribute the infliction to angry saints and an offended God, and the priests did not care to lighten their darkness. When Richelieu ordered the widening of some of the narrow, tortuous lanes, the pulling down of the walls that shut in many of the dirty forecourts, and the space to be thrown into the streets, there were murmurings loud and deep. "It was an interference with the habits of the people," was the general cry. The forecourts of old mean houses sheltered every conceivable nuisance, and there fever, plague, and smallpox lurked. Some few of them were at this time done away with, and a freer circulation of air obtained; but the remedy was far too partially applied to effect any sensible improvement in the healthiness of the city.

Notwithstanding the fine hôtels of its nobility and

its rich financiers, its Place Royale and fashionable faubourg of the Marais, there were fearful spots in old Paris then, and for many a long year after—spots where disease was engendered, and where vice and crime were harbored. After dark the rich, besides their usual train of attendants, were accompanied by numerous torch-bearers ; but the lives and property of peaceful but less affluent citizens were at the mercy of robbers and assassins, who then left their hiding-places, and with impunity attacked benighted wayfarers in the dreary, unlighted streets ; for of police there was actually none, though some ineffectual attempts had from time to time been made towards organizing a watch.

The court had retired to St. Germain ; it was Louis XIII.'s favorite residence, and it was at a convenient distance from Paris. At Versailles there existed then but a poor, dilapidated château, fast falling to ruin, the king, from parsimony, refusing to have it repaired. He was fond of Fontainebleau, but preferred St. Germain because of the greater freedom he enjoyed there ; the number of his attendants was fewer, and the courtiers and gentlemen of his household could only be partly lodged in the château of Henry IV. It was rather a hunting-seat than a royal residence affording accommodation for a numerous suite. From prints of the period, it appears to have been elegant in design, though of small extent. It stood on the borders of the then vast forest, where roamed the wild boar and the stag, and which abounded in all sorts of game, strictly preserved for the royal hunt. He was accompanied to St. Germain only by his favorites and companions of the chase ; those who could tell the best hunting stories, make him

laugh heartily and forget for a time his most dreaded foe—his Satanic majesty.

Louis not only killed his game, but often prepared it for the table. He could lard a piece of meat with the most skilful of his cooks, and was often led to do so, and to display his general knowledge of the culinary art from his excessive fear of being poisoned, which he further provided against by having every dish set before him tasted by the most trusted of his favorites before he himself partook of it. He possessed talents, however, of a very different order ; for he could mount from the kitchen to the painting-room, and produce, as at St. Germain he frequently did, some very pretty and ably-drawn sketches of the surrounding scenery. He also played the *théorbe* with a masterly hand, and composed many pleasing simple airs for it.

The sound of the guitar, or little mandoline, often drew Louis to the queen's apartment, where Anne of Austria sat curling, combing, and frizzing her hair for hours together, while her attendants and ladies praised its beauty. Her small white hands were the constant theme of their admiration ; no less so her rounded arm, her pretty foot, her noble figure, and every feature of her face. How often does the diligent Madame de Motteville express her weariness of the frivolous talk and idleness in which so many hours and days were wasted by this "*plus grande reine du monde*"—so she habitually calls her royal mistress, apparently without any satirical intention. Anne would scarcely have cared to undergo the exertion of playing the guitar herself ; but she liked to hear it accompanying snatches of Moorish ballads and merry Gitana songs. It reminded her of the

Spain she loved, it varied the morning's amusements, and came in as a relief when there was any lull in the "*conversation Espagnole*," which consisted in "*des riens galants et mystérieux*."

When Louis entered, sad, severe, and often suffering in health, the mysterious conversation ceased, but the guitar twanged on, and the singer exerted herself to do her best. If she was the object of his "*chaste galanterie*," he came to gaze upon her. Then, his countenance was watched, and its changing emotions with the changing mood of the Spanish ditty, now tender, grave, or gay. Sometimes his eyes rested on Anne; he did not esteem her, but perhaps he admired her. She possessed her full share of the *embonpoint*, without which it was the fashion of the day to consider no perfection of feature or figure entitled to rank as beauty; and her thirty summers sat lightly and gracefully upon her. Her appearance was that of a woman of twenty-five at the utmost, and but for the fulness of her figure, she would have looked even younger. Louis, on the contrary, might have been credited with forty winters instead of thirty summers. But Anne was not then troubled by cares of state.

Petty political intrigues and private flirtations were her most exciting amusements; and when she got into trouble, she had friends about her sufficiently devoted to risk much to bring her safely out of it; and greatly obliged she was to them at the time, though services rendered to her were apt soon to slip out of her memory. If she had never secured her husband's affections, he had never possessed hers. When accused of conspiring with Gaston for the purpose of afterwards annulling her marriage with

Louis and marrying the younger brother, she said it would "not have been worth her while, as she saw no advantage in the change." But though no affection existed between this royal pair, there were also none of the storms and tempests that troubled the peace of Marie de Médicis and Henry IV. Anne contrived, too, to have as much pleasure as her indolent nature needed, and gloomy as the court has been described to be under the influence of the monarch's reserved and inflexible temperament and the severe view he took of his duties, yet it had its under-current of romance, and gaiety was not wholly banished from it. Though the *carrousels* and noisy revels that Marie de Médicis delighted in were suppressed, the court often danced; sometimes from morning till night, and through the night until morning dawned again. Such was the rage for dancing, that even the dismal Louis occasionally figured in a *ballet du roi*.

Great extravagance and eccentricity in dress were also then indulged in, and to such an excess that a court *réunion* resembled a theatrical representation, in which the actors had striven to outdo each other in sumptuousness and variety of toilettes. Not only were immense sums expended on gold embroideries, diamonds, rubies, pearls, point lace, etc., but gentlemen as well as ladies were ambitious of inventing new and eccentric fashions, or introducing modifications of established ones; yet in this attempt the younger part of the fashionable world met with the decided disapproval and opposition of their elders.

The cardinal minister's ostentatious style of living, his military escort, the pomp and parade of royalty he affected—and with the display of which he insulted the oppressed, tax-ridden people, from the fruits

of whose labor he exacted his wealth—were little calculated to set an example of moderation to the *haute noblesse*. It rather incited them to attempt to vie with him in the splendor of their elaborately-painted and gold-bedizened, but lumbering equipages, and in the number of their lackeys and attendants; in richness of apparel; in the magnificence of their houses, and the brilliancy of their frequent entertainments.

The king was extremely mean and parsimonious, yet he looked with a jealous eye on all this state and magnificence, so far surpassing his own. The crown jewels were then of small value compared with those possessed by many of the nobility, and though Anne of Austria had most magnificent diamonds and pearls of large size, she brought them from Spain on her marriage. Marie de Médicis had very few jewels.

It was probably for the purpose of pouring a little balm on the sorely-wounded feelings of the king, and of diverting attention from his own assumption of royal state, as well as of pursuing his system of humiliating and crushing the *noblesse*, that Richelieu proposed to prescribe a distinguishing costume for each grade of society. He had the boldness to begin with the *grands seigneurs*, who henceforth were to abate something of that magnificence in dress which it had become their pride to display at court. Red and white plumes and diamond-looped hats were not to be laid aside; velvets and satins, and massive embroideries mixed with seed-pearls and gems, fine Venetian lace ruffs, diamond-hilted swords, all might be worn, but varying in degrees of richness with the differing degrees of nobility of the wearers. The class *bourgeoise* and *parlementaire*, the people in their

several gradations, all had their costumes assigned them with some distinctive mark of their calling, or indication of their exact place in the social scale.

Considering the general tendency to turbulence in the nobles of that day, there may have been wisdom in the attempt to mark visibly the separation of classes. For it was inimical to the true interests of commerce and the material prosperity of the nation (which Richelieu, whether for his own glory or not, desired to promote), that the artisans and lower *bourgeoisie* should be drawn away from their occupations and be lured into taking part in the commotions and revolts incited by the disaffected *noblesse*. A sort of order was evoked out of disorder when this classification of the nation was effected and each class ticketed ; the inferior classes being made to comprehend that it was to the advantage of each to confine itself to the pursuits or business of its own peculiar sphere. It was a system of separate interests, class against class, that had evil results hereafter. It served at the time to deprive the *noblesse* of a certain degree of influence ; to mortify them exceedingly, and equally so to gratify the powerful minister, who struck a further blow at their independence by ordering the demolition of those moated and embattled feudal *châteaux* in the provinces, that were not needed for the defence of the frontiers of the kingdom, or for the protection of the towns. These towns were then mere hamlets or small villages, Paris being sometimes spoken of as " the carbuncle and diamond of the towns of France."

Louis XIII. had a deep sense of his right divine to govern France with an iron sceptre. Considering himself as the incarnation of absolute power derived

from God, he could brook no opposition to his will, no observation that seemed contrary to it, except from the cardinal, who sometimes availed himself of his priestly character to read his royal master a lesson. In matters of state he dictated, while affecting to be counselled or consulted ; and Louis felt his bondage very sorely at times, but had not the mental power to free himself from the cardinal's strong grasp. His arbitrary measures, however, pleased the king, and the knowledge that his delegated authority was as despotically and unflinchingly used as if directly exercised by himself, to a certain extent consoled him.

But while the court was amusing itself at St. Germain, the plague was raging in Paris. Hundreds died daily, many from fear, many from neglect ; but all were carted off to pits at a distance from the city. Gradually the terrible disease subsided. Of those who had fled, some took courage and returned. In most cases their relatives were dead and their houses pillaged ; for at no time was robbery more frequent, or crime more prevalent, than during the plague, and while Paris was a scene of general lamentation and woe.

The Hôtel de Rambouillet was not spared. The second son of the marquis, a child of eight years, was stricken by the plague. The marquise was urged to leave the Hôtel, but in vain—she could not be prevailed on to forsake her child. She was reminded that she imperilled her own life, yet she remained firm in her resolve to watch over her son's, and equally firm was Julie d'Angennes in her determination to remain with her mother. The younger daughters and the whole staff of servants were sent

into the country. The marquise and her eldest child attended the sufferer ; but notwithstanding their affectionate care the poor boy died.

For this act of duty, Madame de Rambouillet and Julie were exalted at once into heroines, and, in accordance with the superstitious tendencies of the age, many of their friends saw in the fact of their not having taken the disease, a miracle worked by Heaven in their favor.

CHAPTER XII.

The Duc de Montausier's First Visit to Rambouillet.—Love at First Sight.—A Constant Lover.—Vincent Voiture.—His Sonnets and Letters.—His Letter to Madame de Saintot.—Voiture Réengendré.—De Chavigny's Impromptu.—Voiture's Presumption.—Voiture in Love.—A Wager.—Two Sentinels.—A Privileged Buffoon.

WHEN the plague had passed away from the city, and the period of mourning at Rambouillet was ended, the marquise re-opened her *salons* to her friends. Amongst the many additions to her circle, the most distinguished was the Marquis de Salles—afterwards the celebrated Duc de Montausier. His first visit to Rambouillet forms an epoch in the annals of the famous Hôtel.

The marquis was then just twenty-one. He had head of the maternal devotion of the marquise and the filial affection of her daughter, and admiration of their conduct induced an anxious desire to know them. The renewal of the receptions of the *salon bleu* afforded him the opportunity of an introduction, which resulted in his falling deeply in love, at first sight, with the charming Julie d'Angennes. Not merely in the sense of becoming her humble servant, according to the laws of chivalry, to be, as then insisted upon, observed by each lady's "*galant et honnête homme*," or, if you please, *cavalier d'amour*. Nothing of the kind. A shaft had gone straight from Cupid's bow deep down into the heart of the young marquis.

He was an ardent lover, and fair Julie was disposed to smile graciously upon him. Here, then, the course of true love, one would suppose, might have run on smoothly enough ; for the lover was an excellent *parti* (generally the first consideration) and a man of high moral worth. But he had the misfortune, in the eyes of *la belle* Julie's family, to be a Huguenot ; consequently, his proposal to marry the fair daughter of the House of Rambouillet-Pisani could not be entertained.

The character of the Duc de Montausier has been variously represented ; so, indeed, has that of every person of note in the seventeenth century. Some of the numerous memoir and letter writers of the period speak of him as "*le vertueux duc.*" Others describe him as captious and disagreeable ; *brusque* in manner, and often rude and offensive under an affectation of extreme frankness. A modern writer* says, "*Le Duc de Montausier est le plus beau caractère qui ait jamais étonné une cour corrompue. Il était l'ennemi du faux en toutes choses.*" And it seems certain that he was a man of very high character, incapable of those meannesses and flatteries which characterized the courtiers of his day, and the servile herd that so abjectly worshipped Louis XIV.

The name of the Duc de Montausier is inseparable from that of the Hôtel de Rambouillet and its society, from the date of his first visit there to the death of the marquise. His twelve years of unfailing constancy to Mademoiselle d'Angennes should win for this "Misanthrope" (it is the character of the duke that Molière is supposed to have portrayed in his play of that name) the suffrages of the *beau sexe*. And

* Roederer : "*Mémoires pour servir,*" etc.

that gallantry was not incompatible with the severity with which he has been charged, the famous "Guirlande de Julie" sufficiently attests.* Amongst other celebrities who at this time began to frequent the *salon bleu*, were Saint Evremond, the Abbé Ménage, the sonneteer Benserade, Sarrazin, the eloquent *avocat* Patru, and Scarron, then a gay youth of twenty-one ; also the Comtesse de la Suze, la Marquise de Sablé, and other ladies whose *esprit* or poetic talent gave them celebrity in their day.

Vincent Voiture had then returned to Paris, and for none was a warmer welcome awaiting at Rambouillet than for this famous *bel esprit*. Voiture, according to Voltaire, was the first in France to whom the appellation of *bel esprit* was given ; beyond which he had but little claim to renown. It is singular that while Richelieu was striving to separate classes, the Marquise de Rambouillet was endeavoring to assimilate them, and to make intellect and merit rather than feathers and jewels the distinguishing marks of pre-eminence in the society of her hôtel ; to found, in fact, on a community of sentiments, tendencies, and objects, a sort of equality in the social relations.

Voiture, who was so thoroughly at home at Rambouillet, that he usually ate and frequently slept there, was the son of a rich vintner of Amiens, who followed the court as its purveyor of wine. He wrote endless pretty sonnets and innumerable letters, none of which he intended for publication beyond that wide circle of friends and acquaintances to whom, by turns, they were addressed. But his letters, like those of Madame de Sévigné, were handed from one to another, read and re-read, copied and

* See Chap. XVIII.

re-copied, and distributed far and wide ; thus obtaining in the lifetime of the writer a circulation and celebrity more extensive than, probably, in the present day is accorded by the aid of much advertising to many printed works. The pathway to the Temple of Fame would seem to have been an easy one in Voiture's time, to judge from the one printed letter that obtained him an immediate introduction to it, while so many have entered only after long years of toil. It might have been suggested, and probably was, for innumerable puns were made on his name, that a *Voiture* would be likely to reach the desired goal with more celerity than a plodder-on, step by step, up the rugged road.

The letter in question, which achieved celebrity for Vincent Voiture, was an ordinary love-letter, addressed to a Madame de Saintot, with whom he fancied himself in love, but who was far more decidedly in love with him. No promise of talent, no indication of genius appears in it. The style is high-flown and inflated, forced and fantastic in the extreme, yet not witty. But Voiture must have considered it a *chef-d'œuvre* of its kind, as he sent a copy to the Comte d'Avaux (the same who afterwards was one of the plenipotentiaries who signed the Peace of Münster), in a book he had borrowed of him—Du Rosset's translation of "Ariosto." Voiture, who was fairly educated, had made the acquaintance of the count at the Collège de Boncourt. Whether as a jest, or from admiration of his fellow-student's production, is not recorded, the court had the letter printed. It was offered for sale, and its success was so astonishingly great, that many thousands of copies were sold. The letter was in everybody's hands, and Voiture's

name in everybody's mouth. How Madame de Saintot liked this publication of her *billet-doux* we are not informed. But probably the name of the lady to whom this famous epistle was addressed was not then made known.

Some friend sent a copy of it to M. de Chaudebonne—*chevalier d'honneur* of the Duchesse d'Orleans—who was very greatly amused by it. Meeting Voiture casually in Paris, he shook him heartily by the hand, and said (as M. Roux, Voiture's biographer, remarks), after the coarse manner of the time, "*Monsieur, vous êtes trop galant homme pour rester dans la bourgeoisie, il faut que je vous en tire.*" M. de Chaudebonne was an intimate friend of Madame de Rambouillet, and it was by an introduction to her that he proposed to raise his *protégé* in the social scale. And Voiture seems in those early days of his fame to have made himself very agreeable to the learned circle generally, and to have amused the ladies especially. After a short probation, he was formally received by the marquise, as forming one of the society of the Hôtel. Voiture called his reception within that charmed circle, being "*réengendré par M. de Chaudebonne et Madame de Rambouillet.*"

After this rise in the world, his first patron, the Comte d'Avaux, presented Voiture at court; and M. de Chaudebonne, bringing his interest to bear on the count's, they procured for him the post of "*Introduceur des Ambassadeurs chez Monsieur,*" who had taken the title of Duc d'Orleans from the time of his marriage with the rich heiress of Montpensier. This sudden and great advancement Voiture rather presumed upon. His familiarities were often repelled with much indignation, and this "*bourgeois-gentil-*

homme " received some very severe rebuffs while learning the manners of his new social position. But at the best he was only tolerated, and he appears to have been as much of a buffoon as a wit. Monsieur le Prince said of him one evening at Rambouillet, "*Si Voiture était des nôtres on ne pourrait le souffrir.*" Voiture having been informed of this by a candid friend, replied : "*Des nôtres* !

" Mais c'est bien peu de chose son rang,
Il n'est que premier prince du sang."

Often he was mortified by direct allusions to his father's business, which his own abstemiousness afforded opportunity for. De Chavigny, afterwards one of the witty and satirical song-writers of the Fronde, remarking one day when dining with Voiture and two other of his friends that he drank but little wine, broke forth with the following offensive *improptu* :

" Quoi ! Voiture, tu dégénère !
Sors d'ici, maugrébier de toy !
Tu ne vaudras jamais ton père,
Tu ne vends du vin, ni n'en boy."

But Voiture was not very sensitive, especially in the early part of his career. So long as he was welcomed at the Hôtel de Rambouillet, he was perfectly happy. The young Count de Pisani, the eldest son of the Marquise de Rambouillet, had a very great liking for him, and highly enjoyed his piquant sayings, his witty *improptus* (known to have been the result of long and careful study), and his frequent practical jokes. On the other hand, the Duc de Montausier felt an extreme aversion towards him, and could see nothing either witty or amusing in his

familiar sayings and doings. The duke had a great regard for Mademoiselle de Scudéry, and was in the habit of turning to her when any of Voiture's sallies made the grave literary circle unusually mirthful, with the inquiry : "*Ytrouvez-vous de l'esprit ? Moi je n'y trouve que de l'impertinence.*"

Voiture, in the excess of his delight at finding himself again in Paris (he had just returned from Lorraine with the Duc d'Orleans), and once more beneath the roof of his loved Hôtel de Rambouillet, was guilty of an unpardonable offence in the eyes of the Duc de Montausier. It also excited the indignation of Julie ; and his own apologies and the intercession of his friend Pisani scarcely prevailed on the marquise to pardon it. He had stooped and kissed the arm of Mademoiselle d'Angennes, when permitted, as a great honor on his return, to conduct her from the music-room to the *salon bleu*. Poor Voiture ! it was no easy task to make "*un galant et honnête homme*" of him after the pattern of Rambouillet, notwithstanding that his regeneration was accomplished there. Yet he no doubt enlivened the society. Tallemant des Réaux says, "he kept up a perpetual *tintamarre* when at the Hôtel," and that he was really amusing when not in love.

He was apt to fall in love, it appears, and was then extremely stupid, insisting on telling every one the story of his woes ; for it was usually one of sadness and sorrow and unrequited love. "Voiture," says Tallemant, "held the erroneous, but amusing opinion, that all knowledge came to a man of good sense and intelligence without any previous study, consequently he himself studied nothing except his numerous *impromptus*." Voiture and young Pisani often

amused themselves by guessing who and what the people were who occasionally passed the Hôtel. A grave-looking personage in a coach was guessed one day by Voiture to be "*un homme de la robe.*" Pisani made a bet that he was not, Voiture that he was. He undertook also to put the question to the traveller as the only means of deciding the wager. As, with many bows, he advanced towards him the coach was ordered to stop. Voiture then inquired of its occupant, with apologies of course, what was his occupation or condition in life. The inquiry was answered only by surprise and indignation. Voiture then explained that it was a wager, and a large sum depending upon it. The supposed "*homme de la robe,*" however, declined to afford the requested information, but said he would give the gentleman a piece of advice: "*Gagez,*" he said, "*gagez toujours, Monsieur, que vous êtes un sot, et vous ne perdrez jamais.*"

Voiture once met two men near the Rue St. Thomas leading two bears, when it immediately occurred to him, as a good joke, to introduce them stealthily into the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Having succeeded in doing so, he had the animals set up as two sentinels at the door of the marquise's private *cabinet de lecture*, causing, of course, a great deal of alarm and confusion. He took it into his head, on one occasion, when the Comte de Guiche was on a visit to the Marquis de Rambouillet, to wake him up at two o'clock in the morning, saying he had most important news for him. With some difficulty the sleeper was roused sufficiently to inquire what the news was. "M. le Comte," said Voiture, "some time ago you asked me if I was married; I have decided to tell you the truth—I am married." The

count stared at him, thinking he was in a dream. At last, as he threw himself into his bed again, he called out : "*Peste ! Au diable Voiture, vous et votre femme.*" Voiture seems to have been allowed the privileges of a court fool at the Hôtel de Rambouillet. Yet lucrative places, and sinecures that he sought not, were heaped upon him, and later on, honors that he cared not for—having no inclination to meddle either in politics or diplomacy, though it was his fate to be mixed up in both. All he desired was to make love to Angélique Paulet and to write fantastic and sentimental letters to her and to the rest of the *belles dames* of Rambouillet.

CHAPTER XIII.

Conrart's Petite Académie.—The Cardinal's Secretary.—Admitted to the Salon Conrart.—Received as Tenth Member.—French Academy founded.—“Le Cid” of Corneille.—The Academy invited to decry it.—“Le Cid” first read in the Salon Bleu.—Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie.—Un Bureau d'Esprit.—The Vicomte de Combalet.—The Widowed Madame de Combalet.—Becomes la Duchesse d'Aiguillon.—The rival Salons.—The Salon Bleu still bears the Palm.

It had been for some time the custom of a few literary men—nine in number—to assemble on certain evenings at the Hôtel of the rich financier, Conrart, a great patron of literature and himself a writer. Their object was free discussion on learned subjects ; also the improvement of the French language, by bringing into discredit certain words in general use by coarse writers of that day, and banishing from familiar conversation those pompous terms in which it was becoming customary to clothe the most simple ideas. These *literati* were all frequenters of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, but at Conrart's private *réunions*—to which they gave the name of the “*Petite Académie*,” they were under far less restraint. No ladies were present towards whom it was their privilege or irksome duty to pay the part of “*galants hommes*,” and the etiquette observed in the *salon bleu*—to their great relief, no doubt—was not insisted upon in the Salon Conrart.

The meetings of this select and learned “Council of Nine” soon came to the knowledge of the inde-

fatigable Boisrobert, who was ever ready to play the part of jackal to the lion De Richelieu. Always was he keenly on the watch to snatch at any and every thing that promised to afford but a shred towards the weaving of that cloak of false glory with which the cardinal-minister was to dazzle the eyes of posterity, despite the personal vices it concealed, and the merciless tyranny by which he extinguished the liberties of the people. Boisrobert, therefore, sought admission to the *réunions* of the Salon Conrart. But it was contrary to the rules of the *Petite Académie* to admit outsiders, and as a man of letters, Boisrobert could claim no consideration whatever. He was in repute, in fact, only with his master, and even he valued him less for his small poetic talent than for a certain genial humor and flow of spirits that often dispelled the fits of spleen he was subject to.*

Antoine Godeau, who had put the *Bénédicte* into verse, for which the cardinal, for the sake of making a *jeu de mots*, gave him the bishopric of Grasse, was one of the Nine. To him, as having a sort of claim upon his good offices, Boisrobert addressed himself. And, through Godeau's influence, the stringent rule "that no strangers be admitted," was relaxed in favor of the powerful minister's secretary. After reporting to his master what he had done and had seen and heard, he suggested that with a larger

* Citois, the cardinal's physician, when summoned to prescribe for his Eminence in his hours of gloom and depression, was accustomed, we are told, after writing his prescription, to add: "No recipe so effectual as a drachm of Boisrobert." And Boisrobert, though a very unclerical personage, was rewarded with the Abbacy of Chatillon-sur-Seine.

number of members and a legal form given to it, such an assembly might become an influential one in the literary world. The suggestion was favorably received by his Eminence. He saw in it both present and future renown, as the patron and protector of men of learning and as the enlightened minister who first, in France, gave an impulse to the cultivation of letters. Boisrobert was authorized to propose, in the cardinal's name, that the *Petite Académie* should extend its limited circle and increase its sphere of usefulness by placing itself under legal sanction.

The proposal was not well received. The little society did not desire the interference of the cardinal. Its members, therefore, deputed Boisrobert to represent to him that by increasing their number and fettering themselves with legal forms, one of the chief objects of their meetings—the spending the evenings together as intimate private friends, in order to discuss freely and irresponsibly certain literary questions, and other topics of interest to them and their host—would at once be at an end. For a time, there the matter rested ; but neither Boisrobert nor the cardinal had given it up. The former, by perseverance, obtained admission to the *Petite Académie* as its tenth member. By degrees, and through his influence, eight others were introduced, when the question of “legal form” was again brought on the *tapis* and put to the vote. The original nine voted against it, also one of the new members, so that the cardinal was yet in a minority. Boisrobert still persevered, intrigued, and insisted, until the number of members was increased to twenty-eight.

His Eminence himself now appeared on the scene,

secure of victory, for his indefatigable secretary had already secured it for him. A majority of the society decided in favor of the cardinal's proposal to found an *Académie Française*, and consequently in 1634 the regulations for the formation of the society were drawn up—Balzac, Vaugelas, Chapelain, and Voiture becoming members. In January, 1635, the letters patent for the legal establishment of the Academy and its forty arm-chairs were given. Those were not the first royal letters authorizing the establishment of an Academy. Charles IX. granted them in 1570 to the poet Antoine de Baïf, and the musician Thibault de Courville, for similar objects, "the improvement and progress of the French language," but the civil war and religious persecutions probably prevented their being acted upon.

To acquire the art of speaking easily and well, with fluency, correctness, and polished diction, was a chief aim of those long conversations at Rambouillet on literary and other given subjects. But the very undue reputation accorded to Voiture had induced a desire to imitate him ; consequently, his faults were exaggerated, being easiest of imitation, while his originality, his sole claim to merit, was altogether wanting ; and thus both in epistolary writings and in conversation an affected phraseology was introduced under the name of refinement. Voiture was credited with a style both poetic and perfect ; but it is labored in the extreme. It gives one the idea of a striving and writhing after wit ; of an effort, not always successful, to produce an epigram in every sentence. Ingenious turns of thought are frequent in his epistles, but one naturally expressed is rarely met with.

The writer of vapid missives to fine ladies was little qualified to sit in judgment on a *chef-a'œuvre* of the grand Corneille, who created the *style tragique*, ennobled the French language, and elevated the genius of the nation. But it was Voiture's fate to be thrust into positions for which he had neither qualification nor inclination, and thus it fell to his lot to be included in that assembly of academicians invited by the cardinal to condemn "Le Cid." It was the first considerable work they had been required to exercise their critical powers upon. Its triumph displeased his Eminence because it was the triumph of genius, and his Academy was expected to decry it ; to pronounce it as failing to satisfy in its construction, as a play, the requirements of dramatic art, while as a poem it was poor in thought and sentiment, and wanting in that elevation of style which the loftiness of the subject demanded. But probably neither the cardinal nor the Academy was capable of appreciating Corneille. Duly to estimate his beauties, and to point out his faults, some good models of French dramatic writing on which to form correct judgment and good taste must already have come under the notice of his critics. But none existed. Pierre Corneille was himself the first to offer such a model, and as a pioneer in literature to open the pathway to that excellence attained by the later poets, as also to the acquirement of that harmony, lucidity, and beauty of style, characteristic of the best French prose writers.

All the earlier and best pieces of Corneille were first read in the famous *salon bleu*, and received there the warmest tribute of admiration from its distinguished society. Whether the refinements of Ram-

bouillet were at all influential in forming the style of Corneille can, of course, only be conjectured ; but it may be affirmed that no writings of that period contributed more largely than his towards accomplishing the purely literary objects of the *réunions* of the celebrated marquise. His academical critics had doubtless been present at the first reading of the "Cid," and, like the rest of the company, had approved it. Called upon to condemn, and to award the palm of excellence in dramatic writing to Georges de Scudéry, they refrained from doing so. Their opinions were, however, given with considerable reserve, and some defects, as they conceived, in the conduct of the action of the piece were pointed out, probably that they might not be altogether opposed in their judgment to the wishes of his Eminence.

The French language at the time of the foundation of the Academy retained, like the manners of the age, too many traces of the coarseness and barbarism of the preceding century. As a means towards effecting its desired purification, Chapelain, who, though an inferior poet, was a man of considerable erudition and well acquainted with several languages, suggested to his colleagues the compilation of a standard French dictionary, from which all words whose use was not sanctioned by the Academy should be expunged, and others that it might be desirable to substitute for them introduced. His suggestion was approved of. The famous "*Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*" was begun, and Chapelain lived to see the work ended, though it was not completed and issued until forty years after. One cause of the delay—the chief one, in fact—was the immense correspondence the undertaking led to, and the num-

ber of discussions it occasioned on the rejection, adoption, and retention of a variety of words.

The head-quarters of *la société polie* had, naturally, a voice in the matter. Julie d'Angennes, in a series of letters in a lively strain, contended successfully with the learned academicians for the retention of the useful word *car*, which they had proposed to abolish. It was then in too frequent use, and a stiff and labored style of writing was the result. By its means "*des gentilleses*," to quote the words of M. Taine, "*s'allongeaient en phrases aussi concertées qu'une dissertation académique.*" Still it was not desirable to suppress it altogether; and probably the Academy could not have done so, especially as no acceptable equivalent was offered for it. But it was well to call attention to and to deprecate its unsparing use, so common in the writings of that day.

A rival *salon* now offered its attractions to the academicians and *gens de lettres* generally. Most appropriately it was that of the niece of their patron, who was about to exchange his red hat for a helmet and to assume the spear and shield. A herald, armed *cap-à-pie*, had been sent to Brussels to declare in the name of the potent Louis XIII., his hostile intentions against his brother-in-law and cousin of Spain, and the cardinal and the king were going to the wars.* The former determined that France should be a terror to her enemies and neighbors, however wretched and depressed her people might be under his grinding despotism at home. In his absence his band of poets would be welcomed by his niece, who aspired to a literary reputation, and whose lover he was.

* This was the last occasion, 1635, on which a herald was sent to announce a declaration of war.

Her *salon* at the Petit Luxembourg—where she lived in a style corresponding to the magnificence so ostentatiously displayed by her uncle—had already obtained the name of the “*bureau d’esprit*.”

In 1620, when Richelieu—or rather Du Plessis, for he was then only Bishop of Luçon—was residing in seclusion at Avignon, and sharing to some extent in the disgrace that Marie de Médicis had brought on herself by countenancing the misrule of her favorite Concini, he married this niece, then a girl of fifteen, to the Vicomte Antoine de Combalet. She appears to have disliked him extremely ; but feeling, as we know, was not then taken into account in such matters, when otherwise the match was desirable. So great was her aversion to him, that she fell into a melancholy and desponding state that affected both her mind and her health.

Recalled to court two years after and raised to the dignity of cardinal, through the interest of Marie de Médicis, Richelieu obtained for M. de Combalet the command of a detachment of troops destined to harass the Huguenots. In this expedition he was killed, as it was expected he would be, or—if he failed to answer the expectations of his friends—intended that he should be. His widow immediately retired to the convent of the Carmelites ; by no means with a desire to take the veil, but to remain *en retraite* for the first year of her widowhood. On the expiration of that year, alarmed lest she should again be forced into a marriage opposed to her inclinations, she took vows of seclusion for twelve months, and twice renewed them. But as her uncle grew wealthy and powerful, his ambition led him to aspire to a very brilliant *parti* for the young widow—even

(as Tallemant des Réaux asserts) Gascon d'Orleans, the king's brother.

Whether true or not that such was Richelieu's vain ambition, Madame de Combalet neither married Gascon nor any second husband. No longer a timid girl, she left the Carmelites and entered the gay society of the world of fashion ; by degrees casting aside every vestige of widow's dress and, contrary to long-established custom, wearing colors. This innovation found favor with the widowed part of the *beau monde*, and Madame de Combalet's example was very generally followed. To her it is owing that French widows may, if they so choose, wear any color but green—green did not suit her complexion, therefore, for widows' use, a strict embargo was laid upon it. By-and-by the kind uncle installed his niece in the Petit Luxembourg, which he furnished with extraordinary splendor ; and as even the name of De Combalet was particularly distasteful to her, in 1632 he bought the lands that constituted the domain of the Duchy of Aiguillon and presented them to her. The estate carried with it the title, and henceforth Madame de Combalet was known only as la Duchesse d'Aiguillon.

The *salon* of the Petit Luxembourg never acquired either the vogue or literary celebrity of that of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. It was darkened by the shadow of Richelieu, who was hated even more than he was feared. The duchess was also greatly under the influence of le Père Vincent de Paul, of whose zeal in establishing religious houses and founding asylums and refuges the Parliament openly complained, saying it threatened to fill Paris with idle vagrants and illegitimate children. The court, the

literary world, and the Church, each by turns, was, therefore, in the ascendant. Sometimes the political intrigues of the cardinal, at others the awakened conscience and consequent *retraite* of the hostess, suspended the *séances littéraires*; while the various conflicting public and private interests that agitated the society of the period, but which lay dormant in the neutral atmosphere of Rambouillet, formed naturally a disturbing element, though the expression of it was suppressed in the company frequenting the *salon* of the great minister's niece.

There was no easy unrestrained flow of conversation; for who could be sure that a spy did not lurk under the pleasant exterior of some apparently genial guest of the duchess? or that some harmless or thoughtless expression might not be tortured into a sign of the disaffection of the speaker towards the powers that ruled? Possibly, too—one fears to say probably, for even at Rambouillet, though the manners were punctilious, it was not because the society was really very strait-laced—possibly, then, some one, two, or even three *grandes dames* of that day might not have chosen to give their countenance to the cardinal's niece, and to a *liaison* which was so repugnant to the severe principles of Louis XIII., that on account of it and other irregularities of the cardinal's private life, he for a considerable time refrained from raising him to the post of minister. That he eventually did so was because the weak mind fell under the dominion of the strong one, and henceforth the king merely reigned while the cardinal governed. But Louis had, at least, the consolation of knowing that no man was so well qualified as Richelieu to carry out his despotic views and his

notions of the absolute authority with which he believed kings were divinely invested.

But to return to the Petit Luxembourg : it was not a success ; and in spite of the finely painted ceilings, for which it was celebrated, and the almost regal decorations of the *salons*, the more simple, but tasteful and elegant *salon-bleu* still bore away the palm, and experienced no falling off in the number of its literary and other distinguished guests. Yet the cardinal's stringent measures to secure the separation of classes did not extend to the receptions of his niece, and exclusiveness was no more the rule in the "*bureau d'esprit*" of the duchesse than in the *salon littéraire* of the marquise. But the latter may have been the more pleasing hostess ; her family group, too, was attractive : *la belle* Julie, staid and statuesque ; her younger sister, lively and coquettish ; the youthful Count Pisani, the heir of the House of Rambouillet, and its good-humored genial head, the marquis. He, indeed, was frequently employed in diplomatic affairs, but when at home was proud to be the "*galant homme*" of his marquise, whom he regarded in all respects, as "the first of womankind."

CHAPTER XIV.

Contrasts and Changes in French Society.—The World and the Cloister.—Vincent a Popular Confessor.—He retires to the Oratoire.—Preceptor to the Sons of De Gondy.—Spiritual Director of Louis XIII.—Successful Appeals for Alms.—The Sisters of Charity.—L'Hôpital des Enfants Trouvés.—Le Commandeur de Sillery.—Story of Vincent's Earlier Life.—The Captive Greek.—Vincent a Friend to the Poor.

MANY contrasts, no less striking than strange, are presented by the changes that took place in the manners and habits of French society from the beginning to the close of the seventeenth century. Singularly, too, the career of almost every woman of high rank who acquired celebrity during any part of that century, offers in the various phases of its own often short span an epitome of the changing moods of the outward life of the whole period. First, the ignorance and superstition of early years, resulting from convent training. Next, a plunge into the dissipations of a depraved court and an immoral age—irregularities of conduct being glossed over with a varnish of false sentiment and affected refinements of speech and manner. Then, temporary withdrawal, after a satiety of the so-called pleasures of the world, to the seclusion of some fashionable religious retreat, for the occasional discipline of a horsehair chemise. Or, as then too often happened, to hide for ever in the gloom of the cloister a once lovely face, now disfigured by that dreaded bane of beauty, smallpox. Or, again, when the charms of youth had fled, to

seek compensation in the deference paid to the airs and graces of assumed piety when faded coquettes became severe devotees.

Just as in the latter part of his reign, and after a dissolute life, the change of fashion in his court from depravity to religion—or rather the hypocritical semblance of it—quieted the qualms of conscience that had begun to disturb the magnificent Louis XIV., who is said to have looked forward to continuing his *rôle* of Grand Monarque even in the next world. And not only the servility of his courtiers was calculated to confirm him in this expectation, if he really entertained it—and it is not unlikely—but even that of the great court-preachers of the day, who made him the hero of their discourses; which for the greater part were but eloquent panegyrics of the God of Versailles, before whom it was almost sacrilege to hint that there existed a greater God than he.

The Duchesse d'Aiguillon was one of those *grandes dames* who long balanced between love of this world and fear of losing the next. After the death of her uncle, she fell entirely under the control of her confessor, Vincent de Paul, who is represented as of gentle and insinuating manners, “*qui plaisaient beaucoup aux pécheresses repentantes.*” He was so mild, so indulgent, that he readily excused all faults; so candid that he willingly acknowledged the weakness of poor human nature and its liability to trip. He first became popular with the ladies of the court as a confessor from having filled that office very satisfactorily to the Princess Marguérite, first wife of Henry IV., during the last two or three years of her life, when, as her biographer says, “*elle était vouée à la piété.*”

But this inclination to excuse, to indulge, to pardon others, was so excessive, that "M. Vincent himself was drawn into some forgetfulness of the severity of the laws of ecclesiastical discipline." * He even thought it necessary to abide for a time with the religious confraternity of les Pères de l'Oratoire. This vast foundation owes its origin in France to le Père Pierre de Berulle, afterwards cardinal. Its establishment was based on the idea that, however pure a man's life may be, he has his moments of weakness, of faint-heartedness and want of moral force, when it would be useful to open to him a house of retreat where he could collect his thoughts, and by meditation, and especially by prayer, regain strength of mind. Hence the name of l'Oratoire. The establishment was under the direction of le Père de Berulle. He was the friend of Vincent who with him first visited Paris.

To De Berulle he confessed on the occasion of the weakness referred to—which is said to have been allowing love to slip unawares into his susceptible heart—all the errors and moral failures of his life. For two years this really kindly-natured, sympathizing, and tender-hearted priest struggled with feelings which might, perhaps, have been more easily overcome by active occupation in the world than by solitude and meditation. He is supposed, however, to have thoroughly subdued them when he left the Oratoire, though, in some sort as a further penance and to restrain a naturally impetuous imagination, De Berulle induced him to accept the small curacy of Clichy. But he soon resigned it, and became preceptor to the three sons of Emanuel de Gondy,

* See "Vie de Vincent de Paul," par Capefigue.

Comte de Joigny—his youngest pupil being the witty, intriguing, turbulent, and famous coadjutor of Paris of the time of the Fronde, Jean François de Gondy, afterwards Cardinal de Retz.

The Comte de Joigny, according to an anecdote, said to be authentic, was induced by Vincent to renounce the practice of duelling—every dispute, every difference of opinion, was then settled by a duel, and no gentleman could refuse to draw his sword when his adversary, who might be his most intimate friend, demanded a meeting. Every duel of consequence—that is, where each party to it considered his honor especially concerned in maintaining himself, however much in the wrong in the quarrel, to be essentially in the right—was preceded by mass and communion ; for one, if not both, of the antagonists must look for death. This law of the middle ages was still observed—that “ each cavalier when he faced his adversary must be in a state of grace—ready also to face his God.”

The Comte de Joigny, preparing himself for a duel of this kind, had just finished his devotions, and was leaving the chapel where Vincent had officiated, when a few solemn words fell on his ear, as if of a voice from Heaven commanding him to stay. Somewhat startled he turned back a step. He was face to face with his priest, who had followed him, and who at once began earnestly to expatiate on the wickedness and folly of the act he was about to engage in. Vincent had the gift of speaking powerfully and impressively, and in this case seems to have used it most effectively. For the count gave up the duel, and, lowering the point of his sword, swore an oath upon it never again to take part in one—a proof of

the possession of great moral courage, for any gentleman refusing a duel might then be openly branded with cowardice.

After Vincent became the spiritual director and confessor of Louis XIII., he was accustomed to say mass every Friday in the chapel of the Louvre, where the court, as well as all who were distinguished for charity and piety, rarely failed to assemble. When the service was ended, it was the custom of Vincent to address his congregation on behalf of some one of his numerous charities. Having worked on the feelings of his attentive listeners by harrowing descriptions, which were probably not overdrawn, of the misery and wretchedness of the unfortunates for whom he was pleading, and told the sympathizing *grands seigneurs et dames* how a little self-denial might alleviate great suffering, he would suddenly produce from under his surplice the bag or purse for the collection of the alms, and pass it round to them. The ladies vied with each other in their eagerness to fill it with gold and jewels ; for in their enthusiasm they divested themselves of all such superfluities to supply the needs of the poor.

No preacher of the day was so successful as Vincent in his appeals for alms. And he was not always solemn or severe ; for he was a true Gascon, and could effectively mingle wit and pleasantry in his most earnest addresses. He has been thought to have presented his bag rather too often, and his enemies have also accused him of amassing wealth. But as he left no wealth, and had so many charities to provide for, it is only fair to believe that although he collected large sums and received grants of lands and considerable donations of money, the demands

upon his resources were so heavy that little or none was left for hoarding. He established the foundling hospital, the asylum for poor lunatics, that for fallen and repentant women, and several schools for the instruction of poor children of both sexes in Paris and the villages around it.

The non-cloistered community of the sisters of charity was also founded by Vincent de Paul. All the younger ladies were immediately bent on joining it, and becoming nurses at the hospital of the Hôtel Dieu. But after a very short experience of the nature of the duties involved in this new vocation, they readily followed the advice of their director to leave the nursing to more competent hands, and to content themselves with serving the cause of charity by contributing pecuniarily to the support of the institutions. Another sisterhood, "*les sœurs grises*," founded by the wealthy Madame Legros, at the suggestion of Vincent, was occupied wholly in teaching the poor children of his schools.

Frightful disorder reigned at that time amongst the inferior order of the clergy. Vincent was desirous of reforming so deplorable a state of things, and compelling a stricter observance of priestly discipline. In this he met with violent opposition, and his projects for the benefit of the poor were criticized and condemned by those clerical reprobates. He himself rather discouraged the founding of new monasteries and convents, believing that there were more opportunities of serving God in the world than in the cloister. An opinion which gained him many enemies in the Church.

Paris was a den of vice and infamy at the time of Vincent de Paul's greatest activity and zealous per-

severance in founding charitable institutions. His project for the asylum of "*Les enfants trouvés*" met with some remonstrance and condemnation, as encouraging crime. But the horrid sights he had witnessed in connection with the exposure of poor infants in the holes, and corners, and kennels, and masses of filth, where dogs, and cats, and rats found food, had moved him to pity. They are too revolting in their details to be reproduced here. "*Tristes spectacles !*" says a French writer, "*dû aux plaisirs du temps.*" But they were due in part also to the frequent visitations of famine and plague ; so that in rescuing those wretched children from a miserable death, Vincent de Paul saved also many a wretched mother from a crime which misery and want might have driven her to. Madame Fremiot de Chantal (the grandmother of Madame de Sévigné), who was canonized for her great piety, was one among the many who aided him in establishing this and other charitable foundations.

The Duchesse d'Aiguillon devoted the greater part of her income to the same objects, as well as for sending missionaries to "*les parties sauvages de la France*," ransoming slaves, and setting prisoners free. The Commandeur de Sillery, who had been French ambassador at Rome, was so much impressed by the exhortations and the example of Vincent, that he sold his fine hôtel, its splendid furniture, rare pictures and treasures of art, in order to aid him in carrying out his various projects for the relief of the suffering poor. He also dismissed his entire household, and after providing for a few small pensions to ancient servitors of his family, and strictly limiting his own expenditure to a sum just sufficient for the

necessaries of life, made a gift of the whole of his revenue to the Hôtel Dieu. An excess of charity which none other of the *noblesse* seems to have imitated, though a similar disposal of an immense fortune was made by the young widow of the President Goussault.

There was a tinge of romance in the earlier history of Vincent which gave him an additional interest in the eyes of enthusiastic ladies. And he could tell the story of his adventures as effectively as he could plead the cause of suffering humanity. He was indeed well fitted for his vocation, and for the age in which he lived. While on a voyage to Marseilles on some business for his father, who was a shepherd farmer and the owner of large flocks, he was taken prisoner by a Barbary pirate and sold as a slave. He was first bought by a fisherman, who treated him well as long as he worked hard. Being compelled to part with him, Vincent's next purchaser was an astrologer. This man took a fancy to him, behaved kindly, and perceiving his intelligence (he had but recently left the university of Toulouse to be ordained priest by the Bishop of Tarbes) initiated him in the mysteries of his art. In the course of a year or two the astrologer died. Vincent was again led to the slave-market, and was then bought by a renegade Greek in the service of the Grand Turk.

He now first found opportunity for the exercise of that great moral influence he afterwards so powerfully exerted, over women especially. The Greek had a captive Christian wife to whom he was greatly attached, and at whose entreaty he was inclined to give Vincent his freedom. But before an opportunity for doing so had occurred, they together so worked on his feelings as to induce him to embrace Chris-

tianity, and to seek an occasion for escaping with his wife and Vincent to France. This he succeeded in doing, and at Avignon the Greek publicly embraced the Christian faith. This conversion, ascribed to the persuasive teaching of Vincent, gained him great favor at Rome, whither he immediately proceeded. Paul V., the great patron of the arts, was much pleased with him, as were also le Père de Berulle and the Comte de Joigny, in whose family he became preceptor.

The stories, humorous and pathetic, of his captivity, he is said to have often related for the amusement or edification of his patrons and patronesses, and to have told them charmingly, touchingly, and persuasively. There was nothing studied in his expressions or his manner ; he apparently spoke from real emotion and from his heart " Goodness, cheerfulness, even gaiety seemed to breathe in and to inspire his every word and every look. It was difficult not to love him." Such, we are told, was Vincent de Paul. And although it is acknowledged that he was "*tant soit peu rusé*, and used adroitly *une douce finesse et une grande habilité*" in obtaining funds for the amelioration of the condition of the then very helpless and little-cared-for poor, sick, aged, and infirm ; yet it must be admitted that he did much good in his generation, and that his memory deserves to be held in honor far more than that of many who have been promoted by the Church of Rome to the honor of saintship. In the next century his statue bore the inscription—
" Au Chrétien Philosophe."

CHAPTER XV.

Début of Madlle. de Bourbon-Condé.—Her Toilette and her Cilice.—Her Desire to take the Veil.—Her Parents refuse their Consent.—Introduced at Rambouillet.—Armed against Satan's Assaults.—Anne of Austria.—The Cilice admonishes in Vain.—Anne de Bourbon converted.—The New Star and her Adorers.—The Château de Chantilly.—Its Gardens and Grounds.—Amusements of the Guests.—The Letter-Bag.—A Letter from Voiture.—Tossed in a Counterpane.—Marriage of Anne de Bourbon.—“The Cook's Daughter.”—The Marquise de Sablé.—Beauty of Madame de Longueville.—An Attack of Smallpox.

THERE was a *grand ballet de la reine* at the Louvre on February 18th, 1635, and the *Gazette de France* names Mademoiselle Anne G  nevi  ve de Bourbon-Cond   as one of the sixteen young ladies who danced in it. She was the daughter of Monsieur le Prince, and was born, as before mentioned, in the Ch  teau de Vincennes in 1619, during her father's imprisonment there. She was but in her sixteenth year when first introduced, at this ball, to the society of the court. And great was the sensation she occasioned. The cheek of many a bright belle paled with envy, the heart of many a gay cavalier fluttered with the first emotions of love, as the still beautiful Princesse de Cond   led in her trembling daughter and presented her to the queen. For one so young and fair her dress was of extraordinary magnificence (a portrait of her thus attired still exists). It was of white brocade, with puckerings of fine lace divided by strings of pearls; the sleeves were looped with

large diamonds ; the same brilliant gems glittered on her bosom, sparkled like dewdrops in the rays of the morning sun on the leaves of the bouquet she wore, and shone in the masses of golden hair that fell in long curls on her fair shoulders.

Amongst the glistening diamonds dropped a glistening tear when those downcast eyes of heavenly blue were raised to the queen's. Anne of Austria remarked it with surprise, the princess with a glance of displeasure. The queen spoke encouragingly to the timid girl ; but neither the queen nor the princess was aware that beneath her splendid *toilette*, Mademoiselle de Bourbon wore a small corset or *cuirasse* or horse-hair bandage, called *un cilice* ; a minor form of torture to fret and irritate the skin and prevent her from taking any pleasure at this ball, to which she had been brought entirely against her will. She had received what was called her education at the Carmelite Convent in the Rue St. Jacques. There, naturally very impressionable, her mind had been worked upon by the exhortations of narrow-minded superstitious nuns and much reading of the lives of mythical saints, until Mademoiselle de Bourbon, at the age of fifteen, expressed a wish to take the veil as a Carmelite nun.

Le Père Lejeune, her confessor, encouraged this fancy, for Mademoiselle de Bourbon would carry with her to the cloister a very large fortune. But Monsieur le Prince, who was known for his avarice and love of wealth, was by no means inclined to give his only daughter and her large inheritance to the Church. He refused his consent to any such scheme, and desired that it might never again be even mentioned. She was to marry, and keep up the

prestige and social influence of the family. The princess was blamed by her husband for not having discovered and sooner checked this foolish whim. She herself was extremely devout—frequently retiring to the fashionable Carmelite Convent for a few days of meditation and prayer. She and the prince were not often agreed in opinion, but in this instance they were perfectly in harmony. The one lovely daughter who had inherited the beauty of her mother—beauty that had stirred so deeply the pulses of a grey-bearded king—must not waste her sweetness on the desert air of a cloister and fade away in the gloom of a convent.

But it was not so easy a matter to turn the young lady from her purpose. Though removed from the convent she confided all her sorrows to the nuns on those days when she still was allowed to pass an hour or two with them. Monsieur le Prince was too powerful a personage directly to oppose, but they could comfort and cheer their devout pupil with hopes that, if her firmness remained unshaken, she yet might enter their doors to pass out of them no more. And what were all the *fêtes* and *carrousels*, the balls and the shows of the sinful world, compared with the shows of the Church? the magnificent vestments, the pictures, the sculpture, the music, the incense, the gentle sisters, the convent's angelic peace?—peace too often born of despair!

It was determined by her parents that, although so young, she should begin to frequent general society before her *début* at court, and accordingly Mademoiselle de Bourbon was introduced at Rambouillet. But whether that the great interest then taken there in the proposed rejection of many words in the

language had so fully engrossed the attention of the company that they could give heed to no other objects, or that the new visitor cared not whether *prouesses* gave place to *grandes actions* or *pensers* to *pensées*—(these words being then under discussion by the dictionary people)—it is certain that no favorable impression was either made or received by this pouting young damsel who was resolved to be a nun. The same want of success attended her introduction at the Hôtel of the Duchesse de Liancourt who had also begun to receive a select circle of the *beau monde* and *gens de lettres*. The princess, disappointed and grieved, could not refrain from bitterly reproaching her daughter. She is said to have replied: "*Vous avez, Madame, des grâces si touchantes que comme je ne vais qu'avec vous, et ne parais qu'après vous, on ne m'en trouve point.*" An answer worthy of Rambouillet, and which showed that mademoiselle had already some insight into character—for Madame la Princesse could never forget that her beauty had created a sensation, and that she was still considered *belle*, and really was *jeune encore*.

At length the prince himself announced to his daughter that she would be required in three days from that time to appear at a ball to be given by the queen at the Louvre, and that she would have to take her part in the *ballet de la reine*. Poor mademoiselle! To most girls this would have been a delightful piece of news, to her it was a sorrowful one. Entreaties to be excused were of no avail. Any appearance of intention to resist the parental will would be met, she was assured, by the exercise of parental authority to enforce it. Great was the consternation, the affliction, the embarrassment of the

Carmelites. They could not advise her to obey—they dared not counsel her to disobey. After long musing, a brilliant thought, as if by inspiration, came suddenly into the mind of the abbess. It was to arm the victim, against the assaults of Satan, with a shield in the shape of a horse-hair *cuirasse*. The nuns warmly approved, and the vestment was immediately provided and stealthily placed upon her. At the same time they warned her to be constantly on her guard and unfailing in her attention to the admonitory scratchings of the *cilice*. Her faith in it, like theirs, was unbounded ; her self-confidence not less. Forth then she went, arrayed in gold and gems that added no charm to her beauty, to prove, as she felt, how powerless were all the vain pleasures of the world to lure her from the path of piety she had chosen.

The plumed, diamond-decked and lace-bedizened courtiers had assembled in full force that evening. The ladies—a glittering throng, frizzed and rouged and fluttering their jewelled Moorish fans—attended as numerously. Hundreds of wax-lights illumined the vast *salon*, at the farther end of which, in a large crimson velvet and gold-fringed arm-chair, sat Anne of Austria, Louis' neglected wife. She was splendidly dressed, and was a royal-looking woman, though at that time far less beautiful than some writers have described her ; for she had grown large and lazy and was far too highly rouged. But her coquettish *agacerie* and grace in the use of her fan were peculiarly Spanish, and imparted a degree of animation to her rather indolent air. She was always gracious in manner, and on this occasion was listening with smiling satisfaction to the complimentary speeches of the

Duc de Beaufort, Henry IV.'s grandson, who was ever assiduous in paying his court to her.

But why, as with downcast eyes she passed through this brilliant throng, did the youthful Anne de Bourbon shed tears? Did she feel her weakness already? or was it that the admonitory *cilice* was tearing and fretting her delicate skin? Not even Victor Cousin, who, in his "Femmes illustres," has so delighted to speculate on the feelings and to expatiate on the beauty of this *belle* of the seventeenth century, has told us more than simply that she shed tears. But her bright eyes, "those eyes of Heaven's deepest blue," were soon dried. "What should she fear?" Her place in the dance is assigned her, a gay cavalier presses her hand as he conducts her to it, and whispers compliments that are new to the ear of this emotional young girl. Her color is heightened, her eyes sparkle, and her rosy mouth smiles. In vain the *cilice* scratches, she heeds it not, for she is actually enjoying the dance she had so much dreaded. And so the evening passes away. All eyes have been upon the youthful *belle* of the ball, and her cheek has glowed with proud delight in the consciousness of the admiration her beauty excited.

Three in the morning! a horribly dissipated hour to be abroad in old Paris. Yet the two or more loud-sounding clocks of the city had struck three full half an hour before the *calèche* of Madame la Princesse was on its way back to the Hôtel de Condé. Mademoiselle sat between her parents, a hand clasped by each. But she was silent, and a little agitated by emotions hitherto unknown to her; emotions of delight, which the sharp admonitions of the *cilice* proved powerless to subdue.—Henceforth, she is a changed person!

Who now so gay and joyous as the lately sad and pining Anne de Bourbon? A kindly feeling towards her mourning Carmelite friends she still retains, but her affections are transferred from the cloister to the world. Her desire is now to shine in that world, and to conquer. To effect so sudden and thorough a conversion, this *ballet de la reine* must have been a very brilliant affair. Contemporary writers, with but few exceptions, speak of them generally as mere scenes of coarse gaiety. Yet as *spectacles* only—from the splendor of the costumes, particularly those of the *grands seigneurs* who vied with each other in the magnificence of their dresses—they must have been very imposing.

Of this particular *ballet*, in which all the beauties of the court are said to have figured, it was observed with more gallantry than reverence, that on leaving the Louvre "*chacun remportait de ce lieu plein de merveilles la même idée que celle de Jacob, lequel n'ayant vu toute la nuit que des anges, crut que c'était le lieu où le ciel joignait avec la terre.*"

The Hôtel de Rambouillet next welcomed the new star, wondering behind what cloud it had concealed itself on its first appearance there. The receptions at the Hôtel de Condé, though the Prince was no general favorite, drew from the famous Rambouillet many of its least literary *habituels*. But whether at their own Hôtel, the Petit Luxembourg, the Palais Cardinal, the Hôtels of the Place Royale, or at the Louvre, a crowd of adorers followed in the train of Mademoiselle Anne de Bourbon. Such continual worship and ceaseless incense of flattery might well have turned an older and wiser head, for she was little more than a child in years—not yet sixteen,

though taller, and in figure more fully developed, than girls of her age usually are.

When the spring was more advanced, the princess and her daughter accompanied the court to Fontainebleau, whence they proceeded to Chantilly, where they assembled a little court of their own. It was as necessary as it was customary then to secure a large party to amuse and be amused at these lovely *châteaux de province* of the *grands seigneurs*. There the ladies regulated life after the manner of *Astrée*, and the pastorals of *Calprenède* and *Gomberville*. For until the deeds of arms of the great Condé (as yet but a boy of fourteen) inspired the pen of *Mademoiselle de Scudéry*, and "Le Grand Cyrus" appeared, *Phyllis* and *Strophon* and their *honnête amitié* lost nothing of their *prestige*. The wide domain of Chantilly had long been the property of the Montmorenci family when it passed into the possession of the Condés after the execution for treason of the last unfortunate duke; and thus Chantilly, with its *château* dating anterior to the Renaissance, became a standing souvenir of the two great military families of ancient France—that of the illustrious Anne de Montmorenci, constable of the kingdom, under Francis I., and of Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé.*

Chantilly was the favorite residence of Madame la Princesse, and it was a charming *séjour* in the fine part of the year. If its gardens were rather staid and formal, as was the style of the period, there was

* In Perelle's "Grands Châteaux de France," there are views of the château, grounds, and gardens, as they existed in the latter years of the grand Condé, who took great pride in improving and embellishing them.

much that was picturesque in the grounds, and the forest in summer and autumn was a scene of wild beauty. Vincent Voiture was greatly in request at several of these princely *châteaux*, so also was Sarrazin, and later on Mathieu Montreuil; agreeable writers of sonnets and of pretty conceits in verse, and possessing some reputation for lively wit. A *bel esprit* must have been a desirable addition to those rather insipid parties of twenty or thirty ladies and gentlemen playing at shepherds and shepherdesses. Here and there a fool still formed one of the retainers of an old baronial establishment. But fools had gone out of fashion and favor since Voiture had introduced practical joking and buffoonery as the qualifications of a *bel esprit*.

Those minor poets of the hour wrote the greater part of the amatory verses in which the shepherds were expected to make love to their shepherdesses. For though rhyming was the rage, all had not the faculty of telling in rhymes of the amorous flame that was supposed to be consuming them. The mornings were spent in this literary love-making. In the afternoon, while the ladies trifled over their embroidery-frames, the most ungallant of the gentlemen lounged off by themselves. Those that remained read for the general amusement some part of the long spun-out romances of the day. In the summer evenings the whole party set out together for a promenade in the grounds, but generally returned in straggling couples; it was so easy for those who wished it to wander from the right path in those mazy thickets and woods. When the party reassembled, there were sports, and games, and music (singing with lute accompaniment), in the apartment of Madame la

Princesse, and if Monsieur le Prince happened to be at the *château*, there was a good deal of gambling in his.

On the whole there was no lack of employment and pastime, and no doubt life was a pleasant thing at one's *château* in these good old times, far away from the plague and the famine, the dirt and the squalor of Paris. Imagine all those *grande*s loitering round the fish-ponds and feeding the fishes—what a pretty sight ! or assembled on the broad terrace refreshing themselves with champagne (for champagne was then no less esteemed by the ladies than it is now. And more deservedly so, as it was then pure *vin de champagne*, not a fizzing concoction of heaven knows what, prepared for the English market). Or behold them, in fancy, sauntering over that broad sweep of greenward, while others are reading D'Urfé in the balconies, and some three or four of those charming *seigneurs* in velvet and satin are stretched on the grass, their Spanish hats and feathers and swords lying beside them. One cavalier jumps up, a bright belle takes his arm, and they stroll off together for a confidential conversation through the shady *allées* of the park.

Then the letter-bag arrives, and causes no small commotion ; it comes at all hours, often when least expected, but by no means every day. How welcome those news-letters are, not only to the fortunate recipient, but to those who hear them read. They contain the gossip of the *salons* of Paris, the gallantries and the intrigues of the court. There is not much to tell of the doings of the king ; but of the insolent airs and the extravagant dress of his present favorite, Cinq Mars, and of the toleration this

meets with from the cardinal, many hints, but very guarded hints, are given. There is a letter also from Voiture, it is addressed to Mademoiselle Anne de Bourbon, and as it tells of the tossing in a counterpane at Rambouillet, where one would have supposed nothing so undignified could ever have taken place, it may be as well to let this famous *bel esprit* tell the story himself, observing only that the company at Rambouillet had been amusing themselves by playing at "forfeits." Voiture had been desired to say or do something that, within a certain number of minutes, should make them laugh. He had undertaken to do so, and failed. This failure was deemed a punishable offence, and Madame de Rambouillet, at the request of Julie and Angélique Paulet (who could have believed it?), decreed that poor Voiture should be tossed in a counterpane as many times as he had been allowed minutes to accomplish the feat he had failed in.

He writes :

"Elles en avoient remis l'exécution au retour de Madame la Princesse et de vous. Mais elles s'aviserent depuis qu'il ne fallait pas remettre des supplices à une saison qui devoit être toute destinée à la joie. J'eus beau crier et me defendre : la couverture fut apportée, et quatre des plus forts hommes du monde furent choisis pour cela. Ce que je vous puis dire, Mademoiselle, c'est que jamais personne ne fut si haut que moi, et que je ne croyois pas que la fortune me dut jamais tant élever. Je vis les montagnes abaissées au dessous de moi ; je vis les vents et les nuées cheminer dessous mes pieds ; je decouvris des pays que je n'avais jamais vu et des mers que je n'avoit point imaginées. Mais je vous assure, Made-

moiselle, qu'on ne voit tout cela qu'avec inquiétude lorsque l'on est en l'air et que l'on est assuré d'aller retomber."

And thus Voiture continues, for a page or two, to recount what he pretended to have seen in the clouds, as he rose and fell at each toss of the counterpane. He delighted in writing letters filled with absurdities and affectations to the Rambouillet circle; and his admirers considered them ample atonement for the freedoms and liberties he had constantly to be reminded of, and often to submit to some ridiculous punishment for. However, he had his reward in the pensions and sinecures his friends were ever on the alert to secure for him.

But to return to Mademoiselle de Bourbon: when she again appeared in the "*société polie*" of Paris it was as Duchesse de Longueville. On completing her sixteenth year her marriage had almost immediately taken place. The bridegroom was a widower of forty, with a daughter but two years younger than his bride. It was, of course, a mere *mariage de convenance*. But there were advantages in it that outweighed the consideration—no light one with the haughty princess—that Henri, Duc de Longueville, was scarcely of equal rank with the family of Bourbon-Condé. His escutcheon bore a bar sinister; he was a descendant of the famous "*jeune et brave Du-nois*," an illegitimate scion of the House of Orleans, and the hero of the well-known French national song, the music of which is attributed to Queen Hortense, the mother of Napoleon III.

La grande Mademoiselle de Montpensier, referring in her "*Memoirs*" to the time when Mademoiselle Anne de Bourbon was introduced into society—she

herself being then little more than nine years of age—says she used to go twice a week to the *réunions* of the Comtesse de Soissons at the Hôtel de Brissac, where there were music and dancing, and often short plays were performed ; but what most amused her and her companion Mademoiselle de Longueville (the duke's daughter), was to go there ridiculously dressed—" *aussi ridiculement qu'on le pouvait être,*" and to laugh at and make grimaces at the company, in spite of the incessant reprimands of their governess. To ensure better behavior, it appears to have been necessary to separate these two horrid girls ; both of whom professed a great dislike to the Princess de Condé, as well as to her daughter, then the destined stepmother of Mademoiselle de Longueville.

Between stepmother and stepdaughter, so nearly of the same age, no mutual affection ever sprang up ; while as to the duke, though he had married the most celebrated beauty of her day, he continued to be one of the train of ardent worshippers who followed the triumphal car of the handsomest and most ignorant woman in France—Madame de Rohan Montbazon. She was the granddaughter of Varenne, *maitre d'hôtel* to Henri IV. The *grandes dames*, therefore, indignant at the number and rank of the slaves who wore her chains, were accustomed to speak contemptuously of her as "the cook's daughter." However she had married into a branch of the great Rohan family, who claimed kindred with royalty, and one of whose members assumed the arrogant device of—

" Roi, je ne puis,
Duc, je ne daigne,
Rohan je suis."

The indifference of the duke does not appear to have affected the young duchess or to have prevented her from fully enjoying the pleasures of the capital. And as by the laws of polite society every gentleman was bound either to be, or to feign to be, in love, and to sigh, "*en amant inoffensif*," at the feet of a mistress, and every lady to have her "*galant et honnête homme*," *la belle duchesse* had but to select from among her numerous slaves the one she decreed worthy of the honor of attending upon her. She did not affect wit ; she wrote no sonnets, but she conversed well—fluently, gracefully, and easily, and, what was rarer still, naturally ; a talent highly appreciated and a good deal envied at Rambouillet. It was there she formed that life-long friendship with the Marquise de Sablé, who though scarcely to be classed amongst the writers of the period, originated the fashion of writing *maximes et pensées*. There, too, she became acquainted with the brother and sister De Scudéry, both so unswervingly devoted to her.

But by some writers the Duchesse de Longueville has been represented as admiring, above all things, her own beauty, and as receiving the highest delight she was capable of from the flatteries and homage that beauty procured her. She was a very lovely blonde ; a type of beauty that would seem to have been more frequent in those days both in Spain and France than at present. For those exceptionally lovely women, whose charms were so rapturously sung, were all endowed by the poet and the lover with light chestnut or golden hair ; eyes blue as the southern skies, forms graceful as the bounding sylph, yet with a modicum of *embonpoint*. The imagination of a lover will doubtless often endow his mistress

with charms which ordinary eyes see not ; but as regards Madame de Longueville, one is bound to believe from concurrent testimony that she was a truly beautiful woman.

But that scourge of beauty, small-pox, though lying dormant for a time, was ever lurking in the narrow pestiferous streets of old Paris. Breaking forth suddenly, it swept away its victims by hundreds and thousands, and snatched from the cheek of beauty every trace of its comeliness, leaving only scars and hideousness behind. How it was dreaded, both by the high-born and the lowly ! In the year following her marriage, and in the midst of the pleasures and gaieties she now so greatly delighted in, the young and lovely Duchesse de Longueville was smitten by this terrible disease.

CHAPTER XVI.

War with Spain.—Louis' Love of the Camp.—Birth of the Dauphin.—A second *Enfant de France*.—Le Grand Condé.—Marries Richelieu's Niece.—Morbid Fancies of Louis XIII.—Death of Marie de Médicis.—Sympathy of the People.—Richelieu's failing Health.—Cinq Mars.—Provokes the King's Anger.—His picturesque Appearance.—Un mauvais quart d'heure.—Death of the great Cardinal.—If a great Minister, but a poor Poet.

Louis XIII. was at war with Spain, and chiefly because it was the will of his minister, who found in war the gratification of his own ambition, and a means of amusing and controlling the king. Louis' desire to govern for himself often inclined him to break the bonds in which the cardinal held him, and to take the reins of power into his own weak hands. But it was beyond his ability to set himself free, and, considering his character, hardly desirable that he should do so. When, however, he became weary of his favorites, and his yoke lay heavy upon him, the cardinal devised a military promenade, as an effectual method of easing it. Louis XIII. was not without personal bravery ; he was a bold huntsman and a fearless rider. He liked the din of the camp, as his father had done, though he was there amongst the cardinal's creatures, and not, as was Henry IV., amongst comrades and friends.

Henry was a rough and hardy soldier, with a lively temper and a winning tongue ; poor Louis was a gloomy recluse and a stammerer. But he liked to

ride at the head of his troops, and to show himself to his army. It gave him an advantage, he thought, over Philip IV. of Spain, who had never been seen by his soldiers. Except by name, they knew him not at all, while the French troops were frequently favored with the inspiring sight of their king, as he passed them in review if he never led them to battle. The result of all this warfare, if damaging to Austria and Spain, was even more disastrous to France—exhausting the finances and depopulating the country.

To talk over the changes and chances of the war, and the plots and intrigues, which Louis could never divest himself of the idea that Anne of Austria took a deep interest, if not a chief part in, he often, by means of the *passe-partout* of his royal prerogative, contrived, in spite of the cardinal's spies and the vigilance of Vincent de Paul, to spend an hour or so at the grating with Mdlle. de La Fayette. Into her sympathizing ear he poured the tale of his military and political hopes and fears, and his complaints and suspicions of his wife. She consoled, comforted, and advised, and brought him for a time to think less unkindly of the queen ; and but for her apathy, Louis might have been constrained to acknowledge that Anne had been unfairly and harshly treated. When, however, to the joy of the nation (who, owing to the weak health of the king, had begun to fear that Gascon might shortly reign over them, and expected no advantage from the change), a son was born to Louis, he refused to take the infant in his arms, and, as was customary, kiss him. And Anne was far more deeply pained by this affront than by all his neglect and indifference.

An astrologer was in waiting in the adjoining

room for the announcement of the birth, in order immediately to cast the child's nativity. His prediction of the brilliant destiny of the future Louis XIV. probably helped to soothe the wounded feelings of the mother, who was as firm a believer in the arts of the astrologer, and his power to see into futurity, as she was in the efficacy of the superstitious practices of her Church to win the favor of Heaven. The people were not backward in celebrating the birth of the dauphin ; and there was a magnificent state christening, at which Mazarin—who was then nuncio extraordinary in France, and high in the favor of Richelieu—held the child for Pope Urban VIII. As the little dauphin lived and thrived, and a second son—Philippe, Monsieur—was born within the next two years, Gascon could no longer look to succeed to the throne. The consideration he had hitherto been held in by the many plotters and intriguers against the cardinal minister, considerably declined. But there was still a chance of the regency, as it was doubtful whether Louis' experience of the incompetency of his mother to govern the kingdom, and the almost contemptuous opinion he had of the character and abilities of the queen, would not outweigh his hatred of his brother, and lead him, in case of a minority, to appoint him regent.

Gascon, from restlessness of disposition, and discontent with the cardinal, who refused him the government of certain provinces he desired, was ever ready to favor any plot or conspiracy against the court and the minister, and to invite others to revolt. But when their schemes were discovered or frustrated, he scrupled not to sacrifice his partisans and friends in order to make his own peace. He

possessed personal courage, but his seditious enterprises were as readily abandoned as undertaken, owing to instability of purpose ; while those who had supported them were as promptly deserted, from his utter want of honor and moral principle. He was the cause of the execution of the brave and intrepid Montmorenci, and of that of Cinq Mars and De Thou.

The fortune of war had been long unfavorable to France, when, at about this time, a young general of but twenty years of age turned the tide in its favor. The Spaniards laughed at the idea of a beardless boy commanding an army that was to face the veteran troops of Spain, led by a distinguished and experienced general. The boy-commander was the young Duke d'Enghien, better known as the Grand Condé. "The art of war," as a French writer has remarked, "seemed to be in him a natural instinct." Other great captains have learned it by degrees, and generally have acquired renown only after experience in the battle-field ; but the Grand Condé was born a general, and he was a general that never was beaten. Richelieu had arranged a marriage between the duke and his niece, Mademoiselle de Maillé de Brézé, notwithstanding the objections raised by Madame la Princesse against a union with the family of the man who had sent her brother to the scaffold. The prince, who saw in it the prospect of further enriching his family, had overruled her objections. The bridegroom himself was indifferent, for the bride was not beautiful, and she, having no voice in the matter, became, willingly or unwillingly, Duchesse d'Enghien.

The education of the young duchess—though she

was the daughter of a distinguished man of ancient and noble family, the Maréchal de Maillé de Brézé, greatly enriched, too, since Richelieu had governed—had been so entirely neglected, that she could neither read nor write. That she might receive some rudimentary instruction, the duke placed her in the Carmelite convent of St. Denis, during his absence on a journey to Roussillon, with the king. Before setting out on this journey, the king, who was always tormented by evil suspicions, broke a piece of money with M. de Martigny, almost the only member of his household in whom he had confidence, and enjoined him to keep a careful and constant guard over the two young princes. On no account was he to allow them to be removed, or to be placed under another's supervision, even if he should receive an order to do so under his, the king's, own hand. If evil should seem to threaten them, M. de Martigny was to apprise him of it by sending the half piece of money left with him. The king, however, returned to find that his children were well, and had been in no way molested. What he suspected, or whom he mistrusted, was never known ; but he was a prey to these morbid fancies.

There is no greater blot on the memory of Louis XIII. than his treatment of his mother. She had not only vainly solicited permission to return to France, but had been allowed for eleven years to live in great indigence, dependent, in a foreign country, on the sympathy and aid of strangers. She was accustomed, when she would humiliate the king and his minister in the eyes of the friends she met with, to point to her mean dress, soiled and threadbare, and to her miserable rooms, destitute of necessary furni-

ture. In this poverty she died, at Cologne, on the 3rd of July, 1642. She was attended in her last hours by the ecclesiastic Chigi, who became pope under the name of Alexander VII. Asking her "if she forgave De Richelieu," she replied, "Yes. With all my heart ;" but she refused to send him, as Chigi suggested, any pledge to that effect, saying, "*C'est un peu trop.*" She made a will, leaving some small sums to those who had been kind to her, and naming the amount she owed to several persons, all of which she entreated the king not to refuse to pay. Her cross, surrounded with diamonds, and containing a piece of the supposed true cross, she had preserved, she said, "*par triste plaisanterie.*" She left it to her daughter Henrietta, wife of Charles I., and, in some respects, more unfortunate than herself.

Rubens had received Marie de Médicis with great kindness, and for some considerable time she was a guest in the house he had built for himself at Cologne. He wrote several letters to the cardinal on her behalf, which were acknowledged by an offer from him of ten thousand pistoles, or louis d'or, for the master's great picture, "The Descent from the Cross." Rubens declined it, preferring, patriotically, that this grand *chef-d'œuvre* should remain in the country of his birth.

The king and his court mourned, in their black and violet robes, for the unfortunate queen of Henry IV., though she had died in lonely poverty and exile. Marie de Médicis, in the days of her grandeur and power, though she sought popularity, did not succeed in acquiring it. But her melancholy fate had caused her follies and her incapacity for governing to be forgotten, and pity and sym-

pathy were felt for her, as a mother harshly treated by her son, and oppressed by the minister who first owed his elevation to her. True, the king had addressed a declaration to the parliament and the governors of the provinces, in which he attempted to justify his own and his minister's conduct towards his mother—a strange condescension on the part of one who deemed kings so highly placed above the rest of the world, that no remonstrance, no comment on their acts, was permissible to the race of inferior mortals they by divine right reigned over. An accusing conscience probably led him to stoop to excuse himself in the eyes of the people. Nevertheless, they continued to pity poor Marie de Médicis, and to regard her as a victim to the weakness of the king and the ambition of the minister.

Richelieu was himself at that time in failing health ; toil and anxiety were telling upon him. For with all his power and implacability, his unfailing prudence, penetration, and energy, he had found it no easy task at once to curb the power of Austria ; to subdue the zeal of the Huguenots ; to humble the haughty and turbulent spirit of the *noblesse* ; to extinguish the liberties and privileges of the people ; to control a weak but impatient and fretful monarch, and to thwart the intrigues of his enemies, who aimed at overthrowing his power, and even at taking his life. His constitution was giving way under the incessant mental and physical strain he had for years undergone, to maintain his own power and position while establishing absolute authority in the throne. While lying ill at Avignon, he received confirmation of a conspiracy against him, in which Spain had been asked and had promised to aid. Gaston d'Orleans,

the Duc de Bouillon, and Louis' but lately chief favorite Cinq Mars, were concerned in it. As usual, Gaston not only withdrew when the scheme became impracticable, but gave information that caused the arrest of his associates, and the execution of Cinq Mars and De Thou.

Cinq Mars, who was called Monsieur le Grand from his office of *grand écuyer* to the king, owed his introduction to the court to Richelieu. He was a mere youth when placed as page in the royal household ; but his distinguished air, his vivacity, and many accomplishments soon brought him into notice and great favor. Places of trust and large emoluments of course followed ; but this young gentleman disappointed the expectations of his patron. He thought more of amusing himself than of pleasing the king, and did not prove sufficiently pliant for the favorite of a weak monarch. At first his caprices and fancies, his skill in a variety of games then in favor, his haughty airs, his extravagant expenditure, magnificence in dress, and firm belief that his own merits had gained him so much credit with the king, rather amused Louis than displeased him. But Cinq Mars had but little discretion, and too much faith in himself to perceive that his favor was on the decline.

He was with the king at the siege of Perpignan, and accompanied him into the trenches. Without any experience in the art of war, he yet interfered in the military arrangements, and spoke slightly and jestingly of the operations of the siege. His ill-timed mirth and raillery were resented by the officers, and, worse than all for Cinq Mars, provoked an ebullition of temper in the king, who thought him-

self a great soldier, and expected others to think, or feign to think, the same. The *badinage* of Cinq Mars was therefore fatal to him.

"*Allez ! orgueilleux,*" stammered out the king ; "*vous voulez que l'on croie que vous employez une partie de la nuit à régler avec moi les affaires de mon royaume ; et vous les passez dans ma garde-robe, à lire des romans avec mes valets de chambre. Allez ! Il y a six mois que je vous vomis !*"

Mortified vanity, resentment, and thoughtlessness drew poor Cinq Mars into the plot against Richelieu, who was supposed to prompt every act of the king. When arrested and placed in confinement, he believed it to be a mere show of severity towards him and that he would be speedily released. His apartment not being sufficiently elegant, he was allowed to send for his own furniture, and his costly bed—a most luxurious and sumptuous couch, with hangings of the richest scarlet silk and gold brocade. When he was brought before the Council appointed to try, or rather to condemn him (for the cardinal, though on the very brink of the grave, had already decreed the fate of this vain and thoughtless young man of twenty-four), his appearance excited great interest. He is described as "exceedingly handsome, tall, well-proportioned, and graceful." He wore a *pourpoint*, or vest, of fine Flemish cloth of a pale brown color, ornamented with gold lace. Over this was thrown a long scarlet cloak, with large and finely chased gold buttons, and his wavy brown hair fell in curls on his shoulders.

When convinced that the proceedings were no mere form, and that it was really intended that his life should pay the forfeit of his folly, he at once resigned

himself to his fate and requested to be allowed to see his confessor. To him, he said, "nothing had so much grieved him as to find himself deserted in the hour of misfortune by all whom he had believed to be his friends. I could not have supposed it possible," he exclaimed, "and I learn only now, when too late to profit by it, that the friendships of the court are but dissimulation." When executed he was dressed as above, with the addition of a black Catalonian hat and plume, green silk stockings, and white silk pantaloons, with fine Flemish lace at the knees.

With this charming young cavalier was also executed his friend, the Councillor De Thou, the son of the historian. He had taken no part whatever in the plot, but had disapproved of it entirely. His crime was that, having been made acquainted with it, he did not betray his friend. They embraced before laying their heads on the block, and both met their fate with courage. As the hour appointed for the execution was drawing nigh, the king, looking at his watch, remarked with much satisfaction that Monsieur le Grand "*passait alors un mauvais quart-d'heure*"—this is said to have been the origin of the phrase. Cinq Mars was the lover of Marion Delorme, and would have married her had he lived. His relatives naturally were opposed to it—his mother especially, who was of a very high family. But he had resolved upon it, being greatly attached to her. This, it has been asserted, was a chief cause of Richelieu's resentment towards Cinq Mars, as he, also, aspired to the good graces of that celebrated courtesan.

But the hand of death was upon the great cardi-

nal ; and vengeance being sated, he desired to return to the capital. Accordingly he was borne from Lyon to Paris in a litter, on the shoulders of his guards ; a detachment preceding him to make breaches in the walls of the fortified towns on his *route*, that no delay might occur in admitting him, and no unnecessary *détour* lengthen his journey. He declared, on receiving the sacrament, that during the whole course of his ministry " his sole aim had been to secure the prosperity and general good of the state, and to promote the practice of religion." The public voice did not ratify this declaration ; rather, the serenity of his deathbed was thought marvellous in one who had sacrificed so many lives to his ambitious views. He died on the 4th of December, 1642, and was buried in the Sorbonne, which he had rebuilt, and where a splendid mausoleum was erected to his memory. The Palais Cardinal, henceforth Palais Royal, he had made a present of to the king three years after its completion, to allay, as was supposed, Louis' dissatisfaction at the splendor of the cardinal's style of living. Besides the palace, he bequeathed to the king the magnificent tapestry he was accustomed to expose on the festival of the Corpus Christi, as well as 500,000 *écus*—a large sum of money in those days. The royal printing house, the botanical gardens, and many improvements in Paris were due to Richelieu.

He has been called " the precursor of the French Revolution," and his character and ministry have been variously estimated. But he played too prominent a part in the affairs of France and of Europe for any attempt to be made in these pages to presume to pass judgment upon him. He was the author of

several works on politics and religion. The subjects of several plays were also furnished by him to the five authors he employed to write for his theatre, and some parts of the verses were from his own pen ; but however great he may be considered to have been as a minister, he was certainly a very poor poet.

CHAPTER XVII.

Louis once more is King.—Economy the Order of the Day.—Le Seigneur de Montauron.—Couverts à la Montauron.—Profuse Hospitality.—Corneille and his Patrons.—Death of Louis XIII.—Anne appointed Regent.—Paris at the Death of Louis XIII.—The Cardinal's Improvements.—Oases in the Desert.—Numerous Convents.

FREED from the control of his monitor, Louis again felt as at the death of the Maréchal d'Ancre, when he exclaimed, "*Enfin je suis roi !*" He was now "every inch a king," free to regulate the affairs of his kingdom according to his own notions of good and wise government. First, he sat down and composed an air to the *rondeau* on the death of the cardinal, beginning, "*Il a passé, il a plié bagage ;*" then, "*avare reconnu en toutes choses*"—he began his reforms by revoking all pensions granted by the cardinal to indigent men of letters ; remarking, as he drew his pen through each name, "*nous n'avons plus affaire à cela.*" He determined also to reduce the expenditure in his household, and to limit it to what was but strictly necessary. A *potage*, therefore, which his *aide-de-camp*, General Coquerel, was accustomed to take every morning, henceforth was to be discontinued, also the biscuits of which M. de la Veillière was in the bad habit of eating too many. Others were found to indulge in such dainties as pastry and preserves, to eat fruit from the king's garden that might have put money into his purse if sold in the

markets. Some miscreants, too, had not scrupled when ill, or feigning to be ill, to pamper their appetites with pots of jelly—thus causing the supply for the king's table to come to an end before the date he had set down for its renewal.

Louis XIII. piqued himself on raising spring vegetables earlier in the season than any other market-gardener. He superintended all gardening operations himself, and allowed none of the early crops to be supplied to his own table or consumed by his household. His green-peas were always the first in the market, and were bought, at any fancy price the king might choose to place on them, by the *maître d'hôtel* of the wealthy Pierre du Puget, Seigneur de Montauron, Conseiller du roi, also Premier Président au Bureau des finances à Montauron. It is proper to give his name and title in full, for he was a most magnificent personage and spent his wealth right royally. His own gardens were chiefly laid out in pleasure-grounds, though a large space reserved for fruit-bearing trees and vegetables produced abundantly. But M. de Montauron kept open house all the year round for princes and *grands seigneurs*, whether at home or called away by the duties of his office. It pleased him, therefore, to have a king for his greengrocer, fruiterer, and vintner (he took the choicest produce of the royal vineyards), to supply the extra needs of his profusely-spread hospitable board.

M. de Montauron was a native of Gascony. His magnificent style of living, his profuse liberality and desire to excel in all things, had gained him the *sobriquet* of "Son Eminence Gascone." So great was his celebrity that shopkeepers named their best and

finest goods, whether for the table or for personal wear, "*à la Montauron.*" Richly-embroidered gloves, the finest and most expensive lace kerchiefs or ties, were "*gants, et fichus, à la Montauron,*" a new *calèche*, less cumbrous and more elegant in form, was "*à la Montauron.*" In short, this magnificent Seigneur de Montauron was the leader of fashion, from gloves and fans, hats and feathers, glass, china and silver plate, to the fine bread supplied for his table, which, from its purity and whiteness, was called "*pain à la Montauron.*" The Duc de Montausier, whose establishment was also maintained *sur un grand pied*, had introduced at his table large silver spoons and forks instead of the inconveniently small ones in general use. The idea was immediately turned to account by some one of the loyal retainers of "Son Eminence Gascone;" and a knife of a suitable size being added, they appeared at the daily banquet as "*couverts à la Montauron,*" to the admiration of a numerous party of distinguished guests. Speedily they became the fashion; the duke gaining credit as the first to adopt it, while the glory of originating it rested on the brow of the Seigneur de Montauron.

It was esteemed such a piece of good fortune to obtain a place amongst the numerous serving-men of the Montauron household, that the *maître d'hôtel* had always a long list of applicants to select from to fill up any vacancy that occurred; and the lucky individual on whom his choice fell readily paid him his customary fee of ten *louis d'or*—a large sum for a *douceur* of that kind in those days. M. de Montauron was no less profuse in aiding the indigent than in entertaining his friends. He gave largely to the charities of Vincent de Paul. Indeed, with such a

reputation it was scarcely possible for him to refuse any demand on his bounty, and apparently he had well-filled coffers to draw upon.

He was a pleasant-tempered man and a genial host, and never more delighted than when princes condescended to make themselves as much at home in his house as in their own *Hôtels*. Of those who availed themselves of his hospitality to its fullest extent—to live at free quarters and borrow his money—he was accustomed to say, “*Ils sont sur l'état de ma maison.*” It was his habit, and it was generally understood that it was permitted to him, to *tutoyer* those princely guests and the *grands seigneurs* for whom he provided so sumptuous a table. His *bénédicité* was always an hilarious “*Ça, ça, mes enfants ! rejouissons nous !*” There was also a Mademoiselle de Montauron, a natural daughter but presumptive heiress. She was a handsome girl, educated in the best manner then possible, and treated in all respects *en princesse*. Appropriately, therefore, an Italian prince is said to have been chosen by M. de Montauron to be honored with her hand and large dowry.

Corneille dedicated his tragedy of “*Cinna*” to this magnificent Gascon, and in the usual flattering language of the dedicatory epistles of those days, compared him to the “*Grand Auguste.*” De Montauron sent the poet, in return, a purse containing two hundred *pistoles* or *louis d'or*. The king having heard of this liberality, was rather disconcerted when the Duc de Schomberg, on the part of Corneille, requested permission to dedicate to him his tragedy of “*Polyeucte,*” “*Non, non,*” he replied in his stammering way, when confused, “*il n'est pas nécessaire.*”

"Sire," said the duke, "it is not from interested motives that Corneille seeks this honor."

"*Bien, donc, bien,*" answered Louis, much relieved, "*il me fera plaisir.*"

The play not being completed until after the king's death, was dedicated to Anne of Austria. She, also, was not moved to imitate De Montauron's liberality.

Louis XIII. died on the 14th of May, 1643—the same month, and same day of the month, as Henry IV. was assassinated. He dreaded death, and during his last illness made a solemn vow that if God would be pleased to restore him to health, he would abdicate, as soon as his son should be able to mount and ride a horse, when he would retire to a monastery, and, as a monk, devote the rest of his life to prayer and penitence. But it was evident that his end was approaching, and Vincent de Paul, as his spiritual director, strove to prepare his mind to look with calmness upon it.

Mazarin, who, at the recommendation of Louis XIII., had received the cardinal's hat in 1641, and on the day following Richelieu's death had been admitted a member of the supreme council of state, had become from that time devoted to France. Of him the king made choice to be the sole adviser of the queen in ecclesiastical affairs; for he gave her the name of regent, but without power to act independently of a council of regency, the members of which he appointed himself, and who were to remain in office until his successor should be of age. His intention was to perpetuate the state of abasement in which he had for so many years kept his wife and brother. "He said he wished to bridle the queen,"

to prevent her interference in the government of the country ; for, like the meddling of Marie de Médicis, it would lead only to confusion and the upsetting of all order in the state's councils. This testament, surrounding the queen with innumerable limitations and reserves, Mazarin signed, and Louis, with more resignation, then turned his thoughts from earthly things. The queen, in tears, threw herself at his feet. He desired his confessor to raise her, and seemed to signify that she had his forgiveness ; but he passed away without any other sign of respect or feeling for her, for he believed as little in her virtue as her capacity.

"The people," says Tallemant, "flocked to the king's funeral, and as full of laughter and merriment as if going to a wedding ; while the procession that set out to meet and welcome the queen was like a company of masquers on their way to a *carrousel*. They pitied her," he adds, "because they did not yet know her." But Anne was already invested with absolute authority. Scarcely was the testament of Louis XIII. signed, ere it was completely set aside. Mazarin, as he declared, had subscribed to it, notwithstanding its restrictions, for the advantage of the queen—and a little, no doubt, for his own. The title of regent being conferred on her by the king, she immediately, following the example of Marie de Médicis, appealed to the parliament to confirm it, and, at the same time, to annul the restraints imposed on her. The parliament, whose political influence had for years been as naught, and that would not have dared, in the time of the great cardinal and the king, to raise their voice to express an opinion on any public affair of importance, not only confirmed

the title of the queen-regent, but at once cast to the winds all Louis' limitations, and placed in her hands the uncontrolled government of France. They also gratified the Duc d'Orleans by conferring on him the titular office of Lieutenant-General of the kingdom.

Paris had outgrown its old limits greatly, during the reign of Louis XIII., especially on the north side of the Seine. Any improvements or embellishments it had undergone were due, however, to Marie de Médicis or to Richelieu, for Louis' limited share of power was used to restrict rather than to further the magnificent projects of his minister, who himself was hampered by his incessant wars and their drain on the resources of the country, as well as his want, apparently, of financial ability in the management of the revenues of the state. The bastions extended, at the time of Louis' death, beyond the present enclosure of the Tuileries gardens towards the Place de la Concorde ; the new rampart passing along the site of the Rue Royale towards the modern Boulevards de la Madeleine and des Italiens. Indeed, those boulevards, which the ancient rampart afterwards gave place to, mark with tolerable accuracy the extent of old Paris, with its then new quarter—the present Rue de Castiglione, Place Vendôme, Rue de la Paix, and the streets branching off east and west.

The first improvement Richelieu made in Paris was the widening of the Rue de la Ferronnerie, where Henry IV. was assassinated. He also widened the street that bears his name, and built the gate that led out of the city on the side of Montmartre. The longest and finest street was still the Rue St. An-

toine. The botanical garden just beyond the monastery of the Assumption, near the present site of the Madeleine, was established by Richelieu's orders. It served then to supply flowering plants for the parterres of the Tuileries gardens. But old Paris, to accommodate its army of useless monks and nuns, was encumbered with large monasteries and convents innumerable; and though many fine hôtels of the *noblesse* were built during the reign, yet their high outer walls, together with the gloomy surroundings of the numerous monastic buildings, and the network of crooked and narrow and filthily dirty streets, formed a *tout ensemble* of the dreariest kind, even by day, but especially when darkness came on.

Yet there were oases of brightness in this desert of gloom, and on sunny spring mornings and moonlight summer evenings, the dirty old city, then one of the chief plague-spots of Europe, might, even in the days of "*triste Louis Treize*," have been called "gay Paris." Those oases were the Cours de la Reine, and the gardens of the Place Royale, where beauty and fashion loved to disport themselves. Then behind the high walls were large private grounds, where the dwellers in fine hôtels could ramble at their pleasure, or assemble their friends for the garden-parties of the period. But the poor! Ah! it was a fearful place for the poor. It was well for them that even one ecclesiastic was found to teach that it was in the world that God should be served, and not in convent cells. For Paris, from the rapidly increasing number of its monastic establishments, seemed likely to become a city of convents—abodes of superstition, ignorance, idleness, and vice.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Recovery of the young Duchess.—She reappears in the *Beau Monde*.—Chapelain's "Pucelle."—The Duchess's Opinion.—*La Guirlande de Julie*.—Talleyrand des Réaux.—Les "Historiettes."—Nicholas Rambouillet.—Madame de la Sablière.—*La Haute Volée* and the Financier.—Funeste Distraction.

THE smallpox had been merciful to the brilliant beauty of the young Duchesse de Longueville. The dreaded disease, which appears to have been more generally in France than elsewhere a virulent and lingering one, sinking deep into the skin, scarring and indenting the face frightfully, had, in her case, passed off in a comparatively slight attack. The anxious fears of her family for her life and her beauty ; her own trembling anticipations of recovering but to find her career of conquest cut short at its outset, were dispelled as the traces of the malady gradually left her. The face resumed its smoothness and fairness, and after a season of retirement at Chantilly, she reappeared, we are told, in the *beau monde*, "*dans tout l'éclat de sa beauté*"—its freshness and brightness undiminished. She had grown taller during her absence from society ; and, while retaining her *embonpoint*, had lost her extremely girlish air, and thus, as her admirers considered, had gained in attractiveness.

Of the *salons* of the *noblesse*, then thrown open to general society, the *salon bleu* of the Hôtel de Rambouillet was that most frequently graced by the

presence of the young duchess. She herself did not pretend to the reputation of a *bel esprit*—she was content to shine as a beauty. She contributed no *bouts rimés*, when *boutes rimés* formed the pastime of the evening ; she wrote no sonnets ; she took no part in the discussions on the suppression of old words and the coining of new ones ; on the omission of the superfluous “s,” and the desirableness of transforming, in certain combinations, the “u” into “v.” But she liked to hear all those things ; and, being indolently disposed, to hear them at her ease, while reclining on a sofa, charmingly dressed, and with the five or six “*honnêtes hommes—amants inoffensifs*,” who were permitted to sigh at her feet, grouped around her. Thus she both improved her mind and amused herself without too much fatigue or excitement ; the energy of character she afterwards displayed then lying dormant and unsuspected in her. Her preference for Rambouillet was, in a great measure, owing to the marquis having been Gouverneur to Monsieur le Prince, her father, and that the interest taken by the marquis and marquise in him and his young wife, when flying from Henry’s mad pursuit of the princess, was now continued to their children.

The Duchesse de Longueville was regarded at Rambouillet almost as a daughter of the house, and she felt that when there she was to make herself at home, and she did so thoroughly. There she heard “*Cinna*” and “*Polyeucte*” read, Calprenède’s romances, and the plays of Georges de Scudéry. Also Chapelain’s famous “*Pucelle*,” half of which was pushed by his friends through several editions. The remaining six books were left in MS. ; for patience could endure no more, notwithstanding the

praises of Bishop Huet, and the influence brought to bear to obtain popularity for it. Every one, at its first reading, desired to dissemble his real feeling, from consideration to a man of much erudition, who had fallen into the error of believing himself a poet, and to say something which should not be exactly praise of his melancholy production, yet not altogether disapproval. The duchess, on this occasion, being pressed for her opinion, said, "*Sans doute, c'était un très beau poème, mais aussi très ennuyeux.*"

But at this time (1641) the society of Rambouillet was greatly interested in an offering which the Duc de Montausier was preparing for presentation to Julie d'Angennes. That faithful swain had now been for ten years her constant lover. To mark this epoch in the long course of their true love, which, as usual, did not run smooth (for "it stood upon the choice of friends," who would have none of a Huguenot), the duke proposed to offer his Julie a garland, which should express, emblematically, all the virtues he believed her possessed of, and the love and admiration he felt for her. Eighteen flowers were arranged in a garland, and painted on vellum, in folio, by Robertet, the most celebrated flower-painter of the day.

Eighteen of her poet friends, of whom the duke, inspired by the Muses for the occasion, was one, described in a madrigal the sentiments which each flower of the garland was supposed to represent; the flowers that composed it being also painted separately, each on a distinct page, and each poet's contribution written under the emblematic blossom to which it related. The writing was in the hand of the celebrated calligraphist, Jarry. Both the paint-

ing and writing are said to have been exquisite, and the binding of the volume superb. The duke named his offering "La Guirlande de Julie." *

The poetic effusions were of course of unequal merit. Voiture, Scudéry, and Benserade, were amongst the contributors. Victor Cousin gives the madrigal of the lily by Tallemant des Réaux; his production is as follows :

MADRIGAL SUR LA FLEUR DU LIS.

À MDLLE. JULIE D'ANGENNES DE RAMBOUILLET.

" Devant vous je perds la victoire,
Que ma blancheur me fit donner ;
Et ne prétends plus d'autre gloire
Que celle de vous couronner.

" Le ciel, par un honneur insigne,
Fit choix de moi seul autrefois,
Comme de la fleur la plus digne,
Pour faire un présent à nos rois.

" Mais si j'obtenais mon requête,
Mon sort serait plus glorieux,
D'être monté sur votre tête
Que d'être descendu des cieux." †

* The superb volume presented by the lover to his mistress, and so celebrated as "La Guirlande de Julie," passed from the family, after the death of the duke and duchess, into the hands of the Abbé Rothélin. From him it descended to M. de Rose, and was then bought by the Duc de la Vallière, at the sale of whose property, towards the end of the last century, it was sold (Roederer's "Mémoires pour servir") for 14,510 francs. The editor of the "Historiettes" says it is still in the possession of the family of the Duc d'Uzès, the great-grandson of the Duc de la Vallière. A copy was published in 1784, by Didot, of Paris. Another in 1824, by Amoureux, of Montpellier.

† This is an allusion to the legend which ascribes the adoption of the lily as the emblem of France by one of its saintly kings, to

Gédéon Tallemant des Réaux, who has frequently been confounded with his brother the Academician, François Tallemant, and sometimes with his nephew, Paul Tallemant, also of the French Academy, was so constant a frequenter of the Hôtel de Rambouillet that he has been called "the historian of the famous Hôtel," and "the Brantôme of the seventeenth century." He wrote for his own amusement, and with unsparing severity satirized his contemporaries, and ridiculed and censured the manners of the age.

"*Les ' Historiettes, ' "* says Victor Cousin, "*désenchangent du passé, parcequ'elles sont, avec quelque peu d'exagération, vraies.*"

Their publication is recent, compared with that of other memoirs of the same period. The existence of the MS. was unknown for a considerable time, and its authenticity at first doubted. The "Historiettes" afford some interesting information respecting the Marquise de Rambouillet and her circle; otherwise, as is much to be regretted, his descriptions of society, like those of too many of the writers of that day, are generally utterly repelling, from their extreme coarseness. It would seem from his allusions to other writings, that he was preparing, or had completed, memoirs of Anne of Austria, and of Cardinal Mazarin; but his family either suppressed them or neglected to preserve the MSS.

He was on terms of intimate friendship with the marquise to the end of her life. Though wealthy, learned, and witty, he was considered by the grantees of the *salon bleu* to be a man of little pretension

its having descended upon him from heaven. It is singular that an emblem of purity should also have been employed, as a brand of disgrace, for certain malefactors.

—one who knew his place—while, in fact, he was observing them very closely, and mentally taking copious notes for his “*Historiettes*.” His family, originally of the *bourgeois* class, had been for a generation or two ennobled ; but Tallemant, having married the daughter of the rich banker Nicholas Rambouillet, had to descend a step of the social ladder, and take rank with his wife’s father as “*un homme de finance*.” The nobles of the period, to mark their contempt for the wealthy financiers, were accustomed to call them “*partisans*,” a term applied to those who farmed the king’s revenue, and sometimes “*maltôtiers*” or tax-gatherers, being a degree more contemptuous. His own means were ample, and his wife, who was also his first cousin, had a very large fortune. He had asked her in marriage when she was but eleven and a half years old, and the parents approving they were betrothed, the marriage taking place two years after.

Her father was the Rambouillet who built the fine mansion at the village of Neuilly with the celebrated gardens, to which the name of “*la folie Rambouillet*” was given. He and his wife received there all the wealthy *haute bourgeoisie*, with a fair proportion of the *beau monde* of the Marais, and a sprinkling of the *noblesse*. The most distinguished of “the men of the gown, men of the sword, and men of letters,” might be met at his table, and ladies of high fashion did not disdain to grace the *salon* of the rich banker’s wife. The banker’s son had some reputation as a poet ; his wife, Madame Rambouillet de la Sablière, was a poetess of renown in her day ; she is celebrated in the *chansonnettes* of La Fontaine, and the madrigals of the Marquis de la Fare. The marquis was

the *cicisbeo* or "*galant et honnête homme*" of the poetess ; but he was so much addicted to gambling, one of the great vices of the period, that the game then most in vogue, *bassette*, had almost as much of his time and devotion as the lady. This, according to the chivalric notions then prevalent, was deemed an infidelity, and Madame de la Sablière took it so much to heart, that disdaining either to reproach her faithless knight, or to seek an explanation from him, "she, *sans éclat*, retired to a convent, and devoted the rest of her life to the pious duty of nursing Vincent de Paul's sick folk in the Hôpital des Incurables." Whether the lady's husband approved of this stop is not recorded, but he probably was too fully occupied in composing verses, in his quality of poet, shepherd, or knight to some Chloe or Arthenice, to bestow time or thought on the matter.

But notwithstanding his literary and wealthy connections, his own affluent circumstances, culture and high character, as well as the fact that his sister and both brothers retained their position of nobles, Tallemant des Réaux had sometimes mortifying slights to endure in the aristocratic *salons* he frequented. It was understood that in the *salons* of the Marquise de Rambouillet talent, mental culture, and moral worth were regarded as the highest distinctions. But there was a courtly element in the society that thought otherwise, and gave birth and its honors and privileges the first place. Personal merit and education were then but lightly regarded by those who, generally speaking, possessed little of either, and large fortunes certainly did not command the consideration, much less the homage, paid to mere wealth in these days.

Dancing was then so much the rage, that it must have been mortifying to a man of Tallemant's position when the lady he sought for his partner, if she did not absolutely refuse him, scarcely deigned to speak to him, or to reply when he addressed her; for ladies of noble birth did not willingly dance with the financiers unless they wished to borrow money of them, or get advances on their jewels to pay their gambling debts. Tallemant des Réaux was the intimate and confidential friend of the eloquent Olivier Patru; the severe Duc de Montausier also valued him highly, and with the whole of the Rambouillet family he maintained the closest ties of friendship. For the rest, he took ample vengeance for all slights, in his "Historiettes," and wrote many a witty couplet of which the theme was "*messieurs les plumets*" (the courtiers), to whose use and adornment white plumes and red heels were sacred. He has been accused of attempting to disparage the memory of Henry IV. He says, "he was naturally inclined to theft, and would probably have been hanged had he not been a king." That he was, in fact, afflicted too often with a "*funeste distraction*" that led to his appropriating, or endeavoring to appropriate, what did not belong to him. It has been supposed that allusion was intended to Henry's *amours*.

CHAPTER XIX.

La Bonne Régence.—Exiles recalled ; Captives set Free.—The Bishop of Beauvais.—The Duc de Beaufort.—Cardinal Mazarin.—His affected Humility.—Indolence of the Queen-Regent.—Evenings at Court.—The Wily and Beau Cardinal.—Laurels and Bays.—Vulture, a Royal Favorite.—An Impromptu.

"J'ai vu le bon temps de la bonne régence," sang St. Evremond in his latter years, and so promisingly did the regency of Anne of Austria begin, that "*une bonne régence*" was the hope and expectation of all classes. Anne had been oppressed and humiliated, and, as some thought, maligned by her gloomy, suspicious husband and his despotic and implacable minister. And the people, who had feared the latter and hated both him and the king, rejoiced with her that she, as well as themselves, was freed from their tyrannous yoke. Anne, too, was all smiles and graciousness. The humbled and dispersed *gentilshommes*, or *petite* turned to the court to profit by the new things, for nothing was refused, and pen-places were to be had for asking. The offenders were welcomed back to their Prison doors were thrown open, and her of Richelieu's captives, the Maréchal pierre, after twelve years of seclusion in ; regained his liberty and confiscated prop- was even offered the post of governor to king ; but he declined the honor, alleging

his unfitness for so important a charge, on account of age and infirmities.

When La Porte, whose ingenuity had saved the reputation of Anne of Austria, and whose fidelity to her was unshaken by imprisonment and Richelieu's menaces of death, appeared before her as one of the liberated captives, she exclaimed publicly : "*Voilà ce pauvre garçon qui a tant souffert pour moi et à qui je dois tout ce que je suis à présent.*" Anne gave him 100,000 livres to buy the place of premier valet de chambre to the young king. But La Porte was disappointed in his expectation of being admitted to the confidence of his royal mistress as a reward for past faithful services. Possessed of the secrets of her early life, he now warned her that loss of public favor would be the consequence of too great a familiarity of manner in her relations with Mazarin.

The queen-regent, however, chose for her minister the Bishop of Beauvais, but was believed to be much under the influence of a sentimental friendship she entertained for the Duc de Beaufort, the son of César Duc de Vendôme. The bishop—"idiot des idiots," as he was termed—seems to have been chosen for his want of every quality a minister should possess, in order to afford a pretext for raising Mazarin to power. He was greatly disliked by the people, but favorably regarded, it had been suspected, even before Louis' death, by the queen. Beauvais' first use of ministerial power was to inform the Dutch that they must not expect to continue in alliance with France, unless they became converted to her religion. Even the bigoted queen felt shocked that such a pretension should have been put forth in her name.

The Vendôme family—always a popular one—was

then even more so than usual, owing to the rebuffs, the humiliations and disgrace they and their partisans had undergone at the hands of Richelieu. The Duc de Beaufort had taken a fancy to govern the kingdom ; it therefore seemed probable that the bishop would be succeeded by a minister no less incompetent, and infinitely more flighty than himself. The duke played the gallant with great assiduity, and the queen received his attentions with very marked favor. She was still by no means averse to a little flirtation — “gallantry and devotion went hand-in-hand with her.” The bishop’s imbecility, the queen’s excessive indolence, and the distrust she had of her own capacity to conduct affairs of state, made it absolutely necessary that she should change her minister. A great coolness had, however, been observed suddenly to occur in her manner towards Beaufort. She had discovered that he was playing the passionate lover to the beautiful Madame de Montbazon, and that, while he pretended to have eyes only for his sovereign, he was assuring that lady—who had half or more of the *grands seigneurs* of the court sighing at her feet—that his devotion to the mother of his king was solely due to political motives.

Beaufort had been accustomed to spend not only hours, but whole days with the queen, amusing her greatly with his lively conversation and by his gaiety of temper. But idle as she was in every sense—refusing even to undergo the mental fatigue of making herself acquainted with the concerns of the government, or to be troubled to express any will of her own in such matters—she could be haughty and passionate where her feelings were interested. The

supple and docile Cardinal Mazarin, by his complaisant and insinuating manners, his engaging conversation, and not unpleasing personal appearance, had already won her favor, and it is probable that she would sooner have relieved herself of the burden of absolute power, which she found so overwhelming, and placed it in his hands, had she not feared to rouse the resentment of her friends.

All who had taken her part, all who had plotted and suffered with her, detested the memory and the political maxims of Richelieu. They abhorred all who had been favored and raised to office by him, but none did they abhor so much as Mazarin, whom Louis XIII. had made chief of the cabinet on Richelieu's death. Mazarin was aware of the strong prejudice existing against him. He affected to be about to retire from France—"the cabal that opposed him being too powerful a one to be resisted"—and to take up his residence in Italy. But Anne, irritated by the conduct of Beaufort, and sinking under the magnitude of the task she had undertaken, dismissed the incompetent Beauvais, and called in the aid of Mazarin. Unlike Richelieu, Mazarin in manner was gentle, gracious, and benignant; he managed affairs very ably, and, by much tact and ductility, gained over the Duke of Orleans, Monsieur le Prince, and others who had supported the queen, but hitherto had been opposed to him.

At first he affected no state, but was as modest in manner and simple in his mode of living as Richelieu had been haughty and overbearing, profuse and luxurious. He not only refused an escort of guards, and forbore to assert—as his arrogant predecessor had done—his right to take the *pas* of the princess,

but lamented that his dignity of cardinal forbade him to humble himself to the extent he desired. Soon he became *chef du conseil*, which necessitated *les petits conseils*—long *tête-à-tête* conferences with the queen in the evening, idle gossip or petty intrigue that amused her—for into the business or cares of state she would not enter, and all real authority she gave up to Mazarin absolutely. And for a time everything went well ; D'Enghien, Turenne, and Gaston d'Orleans fought successfully the battles of the country ; the queen passed her time in a monotonous round of dreary amusements, and spent half the day in her bed. The other half was occupied in praying in her oratory, combing her hair, displaying—for adoration—her beautiful hands, and regaling a rather large appetite with savory dishes and delicacies, for the fragments of which it amused her much to see her bevy of ladies scramble ; she laughing still more heartily when—as not unfrequently happened—the servants entered and forcibly bore away for their own table the yet unappropriated scraps of the feast.

This "*grande reine*" never read—reading was an accomplishment she did not excel in—and her mental indolence was so excessive, that she was incapable of sufficiently sustaining attention to derive either amusement or instruction from the reading of others. She was profoundly ignorant of everything but the etiquette and forms of the court, its scandals, gossip, and intrigue. She was fond of the play, and, after the feast, that was her usual amusement. During her first year of widowhood she sat behind a curtain, concealed from view, that she might seem to respect established customs, while making no sacri-

fice to them of her inclinations. After the play, there was "*petit conseil*" with the cardinal. If it did not take up too much of the evening, "*elle tenait cercle*," for a short time only. These receptions being fatiguing to her, were rarely numerously attended. If perchance they were, she bade an early good-night to the company, and withdrew to her oratory to pray. At eleven she took supper, and the ladies ate what she left. Afterwards, the night being fine, she walked with a party of her ladies and gentlemen in the gardens of her palace (the Palais Royal), where she would remain for two or more hours after midnight; then home to bed, her ladies gossiping with her in her *ruelle* until her royal eyes were closed in sleep. That devoutly wished for moment having arrived, they stole softly out of her chamber, res-pited—poor creatures—from their slavery for a few short hours.

Thus, *doucement, doucement*, and with the same precision as the hands of a clock point to the hour and travel round it, did the inane life of Anne of Austria flow on for some years, knowing no change except such variety in the daily programme as a journey to St. Germain or Fontainebleau necessitated. And doubtless she was happy. She was incapable of friendship as regarded her own sex, and very coldly received Madame de Hautefort—then Duchesse de Schomberg—and Madame de Chévreuse, who had risked much to serve her when, rightly or wrongly, she was suspected and contemned by her husband. "Her Spanish nature needed," says Victor Cousin, "respect and homage after having been so long oppressed." The wily and "*beau cardinal*" perceived this, also that her weakness would prove strength to

him, and afford the support he needed to carry out his own ends—the acquirement of power, and especially of riches, in a country where he was a stranger and surrounded by rivals and enemies. He threw himself at her feet ; being well versed in all the seductive arts then termed “ Italian gallantry ”—for cardinal though he was, Mazarin was scarcely a priest—and he gained her heart. Master of that, her poor weak mind found relief and comfort in submission to his stronger one. In her name “ *Son éminence deuxième* ” governed the kingdom, and feathered luxuriously a nest for himself and the tribe of Martinozzi and Mancini.

Meanwhile, laurel wreaths in abundance had been gained by the military heroes of France, but no real advantage for the kingdom, which, “ in the midst of apparent prosperity, really stood on the very verge of ruin.” The people, the parliament, and the *noblesse*, though greatly dissatisfied with the queen’s choice of a minister, were at first comparatively passive under the benign rule of the cardinal. But discontents arose ; then came resistance and turbulence, followed by the romantic episode of the Fronde ; “ *la guerre burlesque*,” as it has been termed, though a disastrous civil war while it lasted, and detrimental in its results to the liberties of the people.

There was a tendency in society during the first years of the regency towards a fusion of classes, an undoing of the work begun by Richelieu, whose aim was to keep them distinct, and to mark their gradations by special costumes. But after the establishment of the Académie Française—although a few mediocre verses sufficed often to gain a *fauteuil* there

—men of letters rose in the social scale, and the pedestal from which all who wore the helmet and sword had hitherto looked down on the men of the pen, on the magistracy and other professions, was somewhat lowered. The queen showed especial favor to Voiture, who used great freedom of speech when addressing her. But as his *bons mots* and *impromptus* were always complimentary or amusing, she smiled very graciously upon him, and gave him so many places and sinecure offices, that Voiture became "*un personnage.*" He placed the *de* before his name, lost his genial humor, and was so irascible, that he could not endure the slightest contradiction, or opposition to his whims. The income he derived from his various posts, though a very large one, did not suffice to pay his heavy gambling debts and support the extravagant and licentious mode of life he adopted when the sun of royal favor shone upon him.

The queen, taking one day an airing in her *calèche*, perceived Voiture reclining against a tree, apparently in profound meditation. "*Ah ! voilà M. de Voiture,*" she exclaimed. "*À quoi donc, pensait-il ?*" Voiture was no doubt studying an *impromptu*, with no idea, of course, that the queen was driving in that direction. He advanced, and bowing low answered her inquiry as follows :

" Je pensais si le cardinal,
J'entends celui de la Valette,
Pouvais voir l'éclat sans égal
Dans lequel maintenant vous êtes ;
J'entends celui de la beauté ;
Car auprès je n'estime guère,
Cela soit dit sans vous déplaire
Tout l'éclat de la majesté."

"*Fort bien dit, Monsieur de Voiture,*" said the queen laughingly, as she drove off. Such were the freedoms she permitted, and which her favorites often presumed upon.

CHAPTER XX.

War with Spain continued.—Rocroi, Thionville, and Ciry.—Public Rejoicings and Fêtes.—Silly Practical Jokes.—The Young Hero and his Family.—Portrait of the Hero.—M. de Feuquières' Protégé.—An appropriate Text.—A Sermon at Rambouillet.—Début of a great Orator.—Un Charmant Homme.—A Fashionable Abbé.—The Abbé foresees a Rival.—The Abbé attempts a Sermon.—Interrupted by a Nervous Lady.—The Congregation disperses.

ANNE of Austria, fond of Spain and much attached to her brother, Philip IV., was yet compelled to continue the Spanish war which Richelieu had begun in 1635, and persisted in, though it was difficult to define what was his object beyond making himself necessary to the king. However, on the death of Louis XIII., an order was despatched to the young Duc d'Enghien desiring him to desist from hazarding the battle he was preparing to offer the Spaniards before Rocroi. But the ardor of the duke determined him to disobey the order, and success justified his disobedience. The French arms for more than a hundred years had not gained so brilliant a victory as that of the battle of Rocroi. The triumphs of Henry IV. were little more than those of a guerilla chief leading bands of ill-disciplined troops in time of civil war. But Rocroi was a signal victory gained over the Spanish army, and the duke with the whole of the French troops knelt on the battle-field to thank God for it.

The young hero followed up his success by the siege of Thionville and of Cirq, and took both these towns. He drove the Germans across the Rhine, and followed them for three successive days ; he attacked the Spanish General Merci, who was encamped before Fribourg, and throwing his marshal's *bâton* into the intrenchments, marched at the head of his regiment, sword in hand, to regain it. On the fourth day Merci decamped, and Philipsbourg and Mayence surrendered to the duke. Marshals Grammont and Turenne served under him. These distinguished commanders were left in charge of the army, and the duke returned to Paris, where *fêtes* and rewards and the acclamations of all classes of the people awaited him.

The colors taken in battle and other trophies of the war were displayed in the grand saloons of the Hôtel de Condé,* before their removal to Notre Dame. Monsieur le Prince, who was the president of Anne's council of regency, urged with the avidity of avarice his son's claims on the state, while the princess, always proud and haughty, so magnified the deeds of the youthful conqueror, that she seemed to think the crown of Spain should be placed on his brow. There were also great rejoicings at Rambouillet ; for the young Count de Pisani had distinguished himself in the regiment of De Conti, which had been led by the duke and had been first in the trenches at Fribourg. An allegorical *fête* was prepared in the park of the Rochers de Rambouillet, and, as was the taste of the day, Julie and her sister and a train of young ladies, dressed as nymphs, welcomed him to a Tem-

* The Hôtel de Condé stood on the site of the present Théâtre de l'Odéon.

ple of Fame erected for the occasion, and where in songs and dances they celebrated the hero of the hour and his companions in arms.

These entertainments were followed by a grand supper, and a good many silly practical jokes—such as forcing on Voiture and other of the guests dishes which they were known to dislike ; sewing up their vests or coats, and persuading the owners that something deranging to health must have happened to them—vulgarity which contrasts very strongly with the rather stilted tone of refinement, the intellectual pursuits, the strict etiquette, and chivalric manners of the famous *salon bleu*. Such amusements were the yet lingering traces of the coarse mirth that prevailed in the court of Henry IV. and Marie de Médicis. But it is surprising to meet with them at the Hôtel de Rambouillet ; as disgust at the grossness and boisterous hilarity of the court had driven the marquise to forsake it in her early years, and to form for herself a society apart.* We are told by Tallemant that even with the marquis himself, “ *elle vivait un peu trop en cérémonie,*” and the same authority ascribes the buffoonery we occasionally hear of at Rambouillet to Voiture, who was no great favorite with him, but whom he describes as “ *le père de l’ingénieuse badinerie.*” Voiture, who had a superabundance of animal spirits, may therefore be supposed to have introduced these pranks—for which indeed he often underwent unpleasant, if silly chastisements ; but for his liveli-

* Courtiers frequented the *salons* of the marquise, but her abhorrence of Louis XIII. was so great that she could never be induced to attend the few *ballets* and *fêtes* which the parsimony of the king permitted. Julie d’Angennes used sometimes to say, “ *J’ai peur que l’aversion que ma’ mère a pour le roi ne la fisse damner.*”

ness and wit he was not only tolerated, but courted and flattered.

Very different, however, from the boyish freaks of Voiture, the academical discussions, the songs and dances and madrigals of the ladies, and the Italian sonnets for which Ménage was then famous, were the entertainments that were sometimes unexpectedly offered to the *habitués* of the *salon bleu*. One such occurred on an evening when a very large and distinguished party had assembled ; for the Duc d'Enghien was there, and just then, wherever the young hero was known to be, there thronged the *beau monde*, to compliment and flatter, and some even to look at him. For he had burst upon the world as a great general when it was supposed that he had gone to the wars but to take his "*baptême de feu*" under the surveillance of the Maréchal de l'Hôpital. With the duke was the Prince de Conti—his brother, and three years his junior ; both were in close attendance on their brilliant sister, to whom they were devotedly attached. Monsieur le Prince and Madame la Princesse were also present to enjoy the triumph of their son and daughter, and with them was the young Duchess d'Enghien—the least considered of the group, a quiet little person, "*sans esprit*," whose husband was distractedly in love with Mademoiselle de Vigueau.

All the beauty of the Condé family was possessed by the princess and her daughter. Madame de Motteville describes the duke as having "a long, thin, and ill-shaped face, an aquiline nose, lively blue eyes, and a haughty expression of countenance, a large and very disagreeable mouth with projecting teeth, yet with something grand and proud in his face, bearing

a resemblance to the eagle. To look well," she says, "he should have been more carefully dressed, curled, and powdered." He was not above the middle height. His figure was good, and "though he expressed some contempt for dancing, he danced well," madame says, "and with a very agreeable air." The Prince de Conti was a little humpbacked youth.

But while young Mars and his sister Venus were graciously acknowledging the congratulatory speeches, the profound homage, the eager recognitions that met them on all sides, the Marquis de Feuquières entered the *salon*, accompanied by a youth of sixteen or seventeen wearing the dress of an *abbé*. On presenting him to Madame de Rambouillet as a young friend in whom he was much interested, he mentioned that he had chosen and already entered upon an ecclesiastical career, from having an extraordinary facility for extemporaneous speaking and giving promise of becoming a great preacher. This being whispered about, a general desire was expressed to hear a sermon from this youth, the subject of which should be determined by putting some texts in a bag, and the first that came to hand presented to him. Some objection was taken to the proposal by Madame de Rambouillet—a sermon in a *salon*!—a *salon* where throughout the evening sonnets had been sung or recited in praise of military glory; where Voiture had but just concluded a complimentary address in verse (impromptu of course) in honor of the hero of the day. That it should be followed by a sermon appeared to her a startling incongruity.

But the company generally was of a different opinion, and the young duke also expressing a wish to hear the sermon if Monsieur l'Abbé himself did not

object to preach it, the marquise gave way, remarking only that it was very near midnight. This objection being also overruled, and the young *abbé* and his friend assenting to the request of the company, the ladies laid aside their coquettish airs and graces—which they could readily do, being accustomed to go to mass before dressing for a ball or on leaving one *fête* to fill up the interval between that and another—and arranged their faces, after a few sly smiles and glances at their cavaliers, for the sermon. At the further end of the suite of *salons* was a kind of dais or raised floor on which stood the spinet, which was removed, that the young *abbé* might with better effect speak to his brilliant congregation, and be also better heard and seen by them from a slight elevation. The text was selected as proposed. A lady drew forth a slip of paper and presented it to the preacher—"Vanity of vanities ; all is vanity." The young man read it, then glanced with a peculiar smile on the beplumed and bejewelled *grandes dames* and their cavaliers, who were seating themselves in the chairs that had been arranged in a wide half-circle round the dais.

Chance had supplied an appropriate text. The young preacher was accorded a quarter of an hour for preparation, which he declined. Some of the more frivolous of the company scarcely could suppress laughter, as he stepped on the dais. But the deep, calm, grave voice of the young man, as in simple but eloquent words he pronounced the exordium, soon commanded attention. "Attention became interest ; the *salon* was forgotten, and the ' Ave Maria ' said as devoutly as in Notre Dame." He then proceeded to unfold before them all the scenes of the

great drama of life, "*Qu'est, -ce que la vie ?—qu'est-ce que l'homme ?*" etc. One would not venture to follow him through the different parts of his sermon, even had the discourse been preserved. It is said to have been a long one, but its length was not regarded ; for the preacher, wrapped in his subject, carried his auditors with him, as he spoke of the fleeting things of earth, and of death, and the tomb ; then, turning from the sepulchre, pointed to heaven and the glories of eternity.

The profound silence that had reigned throughout the discourse continued even for a few minutes after the preacher had concluded, so deep was the impression he had made. Pulpit eloquence was then almost unknown. His poetic fervor and powerful words had fallen on ears accustomed to the dryness and pedantry with which the truths of religion were then invariably set forth. The great preachers of the seventeenth century had not yet appeared. The first of them was heard that night in the *salons* of Rambouillet. M. de Feuquières hastened to embrace his *protégé*, and the company gathered round him to express their admiration and thanks. No one had asked his name, and, in truth, no one, until this triumph was achieved, had cared to know it. It was but a plebeian one, and had served, with his then provincial air, for a poor jest to the idle young nobles who were supposed to be studying at the college of Navarre, where he was himself a student, lately arrived from Dijon.

The praises so lavishly heaped upon him he acknowledged merely by a bow. He was not insensible to them, for, doubtless, he was ambitious. Had he been but lightly appreciated, he would have felt

wounded and abashed ; but his success had surpassed even his own expectations, and he stood silent, almost alarmed, at such sudden renown. The Duc d'Enghien, pressing the young man's hand, said, "*Monsieur le prédicateur, pourrait-on savoir votre nom ?*" "Bossuet,* *Monseigneur,*" he replied. Voiture, who was standing by, as he smiled on the youthful orator, drew forth his watch, and, with an affected start at the lateness of the hour, declared that he had "never before heard preaching so early, or so late."

There was, however, one listener into whose heart the eloquence of the young preacher sent a sharp pang of jealousy. He was a fashionable *abbé*, "*un joli homme, un charmant homme,*" with a silky moustache and long wavy hair, apparently a young man of some eight and twenty years. He had delicate hands, and was almost as proud of them as Anne of Austria was of hers (hands which, according to Madame de Motteville, had "received the homage of Europe"). But this gay *abbé* was verging on his fortieth year, notwithstanding his youthful appearance, which was the satisfactory result of the time and pains he expended on his *toilette*. He was an immense favorite with the ladies, and one of the most assiduous frequenters of the Hôtel de Rambouillet. There was ease and elegance in his manners, and he

* "Bossuet," signifying an ox accustomed to the plough, was a constant theme for jest with the fellow-students of the young preacher. As he never took any part in their recreations, and had scarcely ever been seen to smile, he was not popular among them. He thirsted for distinction, for glory, and this "thunderer of the Church" was a professor while yet but a scholar—a prelate while yet a subdeacon.

was a pattern of gallantry, deeming his character of *abbé* and Chanoine of Bayeux not incompatible with the sentimental duties and chivalric title of "*galant et honnête homme*." He held the office of almoner to the young king, and was a preacher at the Louvre. He had a pension of three thousand crowns, and many unconsidered trifles besides. He was known, very well known, in his day, as M. l'Abbé Cotin. Molière and Boileau have handed down to posterity his name, and the follies ascribed to him.

When the company rose to congratulate the young preacher, the Abbé Cotin slipped unperceived out of the *salon*. He would not, he could not, join the chorus of praise, and it was gall and wormwood to him to listen to it. He felt that it was praise not undeserved, but gained by an effort far beyond his own slender abilities to achieve. Yet he was a member of the Academy, learned in Hebrew and Greek, and a preacher whom the ladies flocked to hear. But the Abbé Cotin was especially the delight of the *salons*; he excelled in the fashionable literary accomplishment of saying and writing pretty nothings in verse. His social reputation was fatal to him as a preacher; for, with a view of pleasing his fair friends, his sermons were composed of pretty platitudes and soft, honeyed phrases. There was no vigor, no force in them; nothing to prick the conscience, or ruffle the self-complacency, of the elegant congregation he addressed weekly in the chapel of the Louvre.

The *abbé* saw in the young preacher the promise of a great orator, and a formidable rival. When he returned to the *hôtel* on the following evening, the conversation fell chiefly on the extraordinary talent of young Bossuet for extemporary preaching. "What a flow of words! What fluency and distinct-

ness of utterance ! What force in his diction, and yet how polished !" Rambouillet itself could detect no flaw in it. " Was not the Abbé Cotin charmed with the fervor, the piety, the impressiveness of this talented and promising youth ?" 'Tis la belle Duchesse de Longueville who inquires, and insists on having the opinion of the *abbé* to confirm her own. He smiles, shrugs his shoulders, caresses his moustache, and turns the conversation. In vain ; the duchess returns to the subject. "*Eh bien, Monsieur l'Abbé ?*" Very sententiously he replies, " The young man *recited* remarkably well."

" Recited !" is echoed in tones of surprise from one end of the *salon* to the other. " Recited," repeats the *abbé*, more emphatically than before ; then proceeds to tell his astonished listeners that it was no sermon at all, and to explain to them how a sermon, according to the prescribed forms, should be constructed.

" Monsieur l'Abbé, give us a sermon yourself," said Corneille. The *abbé* dislikes Corneille, and wonders at the bad taste of the public who admire his plays. He, therefore, scarcely deigns to notice his remark. But the idea finds favor, and the ladies request a sermon, the subject to be chosen, as on the previous evening, by chance. The Duc d'Enghien is also urgent for a sermon, and M. de Montausier supports Madame de Longueville's and Julie's authoritative " Monsieur l'Abbé *must* preach us a sermon." Madame de Rambouillet seems rather to object to this new amusement of the *salon bleu*, but preparations are made, as before. The company seat themselves ; the much mortified *abbé* steps on the *daïs*. The text is handed to him, and a general inclination to laugh aloud seizes this irreverent assembly when

the *abbé* reads, "I said in my haste, All men are liars ;" for all apply the text to the *abbé* himself, who has contended with and contradicted every one who spoke in favor of the student preacher.

The *Abbé* Cotin has preached too many sermons, bad or indifferent though they may have been, to be entirely at fault. The text is not one he would have selected to preach upon at all, much less without previous preparation. He gets through an exordium of some sort, and the "Ave Maria" is said. But here his eloquence comes to an end. He proceeds with a few disjointed phrases, but it is evident he finds nothing more to say. His lady friends perceive his embarrassment. Some are wicked enough to enjoy it ; but one, who takes an especial interest in him, is resolved to save him. She utters a scream. There is general confusion. What is the matter with the lady ? "Heavens ! a spider, or something, has run over her dress, and she is always so nervous." The sermon is forgotten ; all rush to the lady's assistance, and she is carried to a sofa, lamenting that she should have interrupted the strain of eloquence with which M. l'Abbé was about to edify the company. He proposes to return to the *daïs*, but his fair congregation is disposed to be merciful to its old-established favorite. The nerves of some are unstrung, they declare, by the fright just received ; others think it too late to resume the discourse. M. de Montausier says to his friends, "*Soyons généreux,*" and the *grands seigneurs* decamp in a body. The *abbé*, seeing his congregation melting away, protests that he is unfairly used. "*A demain, à demain, donc !*" he exclaims. But the Marquise de Rambouillet steps in and puts a decided *veto* on all attempts again to preach sermons in the *salon bleu*.

CHAPTER XXI.

Old Paris.—A Leader of Fashion.—Reappears on the Cours.—Mdlle. Ninon de Lenclos.—Returns to the World.—Grief for the Loss of her Mother.—Representative Women.—Ninon's Accomplishments.—Soon Weary of Rambouillet.—The Salon of Ninon.—Theories of the Abbé Gedouyn.—The Court of the Marais.—The Queen's Order to Ninon.—A Pavilion at the Grands Chartreux.—A Lady of very high Merit.—Ninon strives to make a Convert.

OLD Paris, in spite of its walls, its bastions, and ditches, its crooked lanes, gutters, and rubbish-heaps, was a far pleasanter city in 1645 than it was twenty-five years before. It had at least one long lively street, in the *beau quartier*, the Rue St. Antoine, in which were its best and gayest shops, as well as some of its finest hôtels. Then there were the Botanic and the Tuileries Gardens, the Cours de la Reine, and the gardens of the Place Royale, all completed and improved. The people also were in some degree less rough-mannered. They were certainly lighter in spirit and were looking forward to peace and its results ; increase of commerce and increase of wealth. There was some improvement too in the form and size of the carriages of the wealthy, and their number was greater. The *calèche*, in which the ladies now took an airing on the Cours, or from the Porte St. Bernard to Vincennes, was a less cumbersome vehicle than had hitherto been in use, and with its four horses, elaborately painted armorial

bearings and showy liveries of the servants, made a dashing appearance.

One of the best appointed and most elegantly adorned of those still rather capacious velvet-lined and fringed *calèches* might have been seen amongst the fashionable throng on the Cours on most of the fine days of the season. Its occupant was a lady with a fair share of beauty, elegantly dressed, young, and of graceful figure; she wore embroidered Spanish gloves, and carried her mask in her hand—less careful apparently of her fine clear complexion than were many ladies less fair than herself. She had fine dark eyes, a beautiful mouth, and when she smiled on any of the *beaux cavaliers* who saluted her with so much eagerness and seemed to vie with each other for the honor or favor of a glance of recognition, you perceived that she had beautiful teeth, a personal attraction which not every *belle* of that day possessed. The Rambouillet family, with whom is Mademoiselle de Scudéry, just returned from Marseilles (Georges, who is "Gouverneur of the Fort de Notre Dame de la Garde," not being able longer to endure an exile from Paris), salute this fair lady, and Mesdames de Schomburg, De Chèvreuse and other *grandes dames* of the court, also exchange smiles and bows with her.

One haughty-looking *grand seigneur*, young, but evidently a person of great consideration from the attention he attracts, orders his carriage to be stopped, and alights to salute the fair lady of the *calèche*. He is known to be rather sparing in his attentions to the fair sex. He disdains to play, in this age of gallantry, the "*honnête et galant homme*" to any of the *belles* of the day. He has loved devotedly, passionately, a

very beautiful and amiable girl, and desired to marry her. His family would not hear of it ; it was deemed *une mésalliance*, and there was besides a *mariage de convenance*, which political reasons also made very desirable, then being adjusted between his friends and those of the lady. This marriage took place. The forsaken fair one retired to a convent to hide her grief under the black veil of a nun. Her lover became moody, and his temper was soured by disappointment. He sought to forget his sorrow in the profession of arms, and the fortune of war crowned him with glory, but without greatly blunting his regret for his lost first love. This distinguished youth was the hero of the hour, Louis de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien, and the lady he has alighted from his carriage to salute is the celebrated Mademoiselle Ninon de Lenclos.

He wants to ask Ninon the question which the whole of the fashionable world has been asking of late, "where Mademoiselle Ninon has been hiding herself?" She had disappeared from the Marais ; her house in the Rue des Tournelles had been closed, and all visitors received from the persons in charge the same reply, "Mademoiselle Ninon was away, and it was not known when she would return." It was whispered about that she had retired to the convent of the Carmelites, previous to taking the veil. Few gave credence to this report ; those who believed they well understood her character, shook their heads and smiled.

"It was contrary to Ninon's known principles," they said ; "principles founded on the philosophy of Montaigne, of whom, and his imitator, Charon, she was a constant and an ardent student."

Her devoted and life-long friend, St. Evremond, when questioned, replied gravely, "that a family affliction, which had deeply affected Mademoiselle de Lenclos, had induced her to seclude herself for a time."

The reappearance of Ninon's *calèche* on the Cours caused as great a sensation as would that of some leader of fashion in "the drive," or "the row," after being mysteriously missing for a whole season. It was remarked too as in some sort confirming St. Evremond's account, that, although dressed with her usual elegance, Mademoiselle Ninon was in mourning—deep mourning—rich black brocade, with narrow puffings of violet satin, and ruffles and *fichu* of fine point lace. Her gloves were black, embroidered in violet and gold, with gold fringes at the top, and attached by gold tassels. She was enveloped in a kind of hood or mantilla of fine black taffetas, fringed with gold and embroidered. A long string of pearls completed her *toilette*; and it was generally agreed that Ninon had never looked more *distinguée*, or more charming, though she was a little paler than usual.

She had not abstained in her mourning from the use of rouge, which in those high-rouging days was frequently the mode in which fashionable grief was displayed, for Ninon never wore rouge. Anne of Austria had rouged to excess until the death of Louis XIII., but had then discarded its use altogether. Many ladies were endeavoring, as was their duty, to follow her example; but having dyed their skins yellow by long use of paint, they now needed it to hide in some measure the defects it had caused. The bloom had temporarily faded from Ninon's cheek

from excessive grief for the death of her mother, to whom she was devotedly attached. But severe and extreme piety* had led Madame de Lenclos to separate herself from her daughter in order to spend the evening of her life in the austere practices of religion.

Ninon mourned her loss deeply, and some feeling of self-reproach led her to retire to a convent in the Faubourg St. Honoré, with the intention of giving up the world. She declined to receive any of her friends, and only after repeated entreaties and refusals, St. Evremond obtained permission to see her. He strove then to wean her from her purpose of adopting a course he believed she would repent of when the first anguish of grief had subsided ; and at length prevailed on her to return to the world, which he felt persuaded was not yet altogether odious to her.

Ninon de Lenclos, who, like Madeleine de Scudéry, lived through the greater part of the seventeenth century, represents, also like her, a phase of its society. Madame de Rambouillet, la Duchesse de Longueville, la Marquise de Sablé, each in her sphere represents another, and each with a prevailing influence that led to the social supremacy of woman in France. Ninon was not of obscure birth ; her father was a man of fair property, and of some culture. His philosophical views he instilled into the mind of his daughter. Plato was his oracle, and, together with Montaigne, became hers. Her mother, as a devotee, loved seclusion, but her father, well received himself, was able to introduce Ninon into the best society of the Marais and to the Rambouillet circle. She was an

* " Vie de Ninon de Lenclos." À de Brot.

only child, and the property she derived from her family, and which she came into possession of at an early age, she managed with great ability and judgment. It enabled her to purchase a good house in the Rue des Tournelles (then one of the most frequented in Paris), and to live in comfort and ease—almost in affluence.

Her education was far superior to that of most women of the time. Her mother would have had her brought up and taught in a convent, her father considered that ignorant nuns must be incompetent teachers, therefore gave her for instructors the best professors he could obtain. She acquired Spanish and Italian, which then threatened to displace French at the court, and was acquainted with the works of the best writers in those languages, as well as in French. In dancing, the great accomplishment of the day, she excelled, and she sang pleasingly to the accompaniment of her lute. Introduced at Rambouillet at about the age of seventeen (she was born in 1616), her acquirements, her liveliness, her bright, sunny temper, her ingenuous and amiable character, even more than her beauty, secured her at once many friends.

She may have acquired there the "art of conversing well:" for we are told of the brilliancy of her conversational powers as well as of her exquisite manners and enchanting smile, her tact, and penetration into character. Her admiring biographer, M. de Brot, sums up her perfections in the words, "*Femme inimitable en tout, et que sous le règne merveilleux de Louis XIV. fixa les yeux des adorateurs du mérite distingué.*" Acting, however, on the principles of her favorite, Montaigne, who loved ease and independence, and

was an enemy to all constraint, she soon wearied of Rambouillet. She liked its refinements, its elegant surroundings and amusements ; but characterized its learned discussions as “ *érudition sèche et stérile ;*” and the sentimental servitude and chivalric gallantry exacted by the ladies of the *salon bleu* from their “ *amants inoffensifs*” or humble servants, “ *les honnêtes et galants hommes*,” she termed “ *affectations métaphysiques.*”

The notions of the advanced ladies of the nineteenth century are in some respects those professed by Ninon de Lenclos in the seventeenth. “ *Je vois,*” she said, “ *que les hommes nous ont chargé de ce qu'il a de plus frivole, et qu'ils se sont réservé le droit aux qualités essentielles. C'est une injustice ; de ce moment je me fais homme.*” Thus emancipated, she opened a *salon* of her own. Unmeaning compliments, affected sentimentality, and long, pompous dissertations on Greek and Roman history, were prohibited there. A tone of good breeding was to prevail at her receptions ; any breach of the manners of polite society excluded the offender. Conversation and music, the recitation of poems, the reading of new works, were to form the evening's amusement, and wit, genius, and talent were peculiarly welcome to her. Her aim was to create a Rambouillet on a smaller scale, and to free it from the restraints imposed by etiquette which she considered excessive and a barrier to enjoyment.

Very soon no receptions were more numerously and brilliantly attended than Mademoiselle Ninon's. Her natural grace and elegance, her unaffected charm of manner, her winning smile and gentle voice, were too often, perhaps, fatally captivating, but never failed immediately to interest in her favor all who

obtained an introduction to her. Every writer of her day speaks of her in terms of admiration, not of her beauty only, but of the qualities of her mind—her wit, her vivacity, her intellect, her amiability, sincerity in friendship, and kindness of heart.

The Abbé Gedouyn, the translator of Quintilian and Pausanias, and the author of some severe strictures on Milton's "Paradise Lost," owed to Ninon's encouragement of the talent she discerned in him the reputation he acquired in his day. Gedouyn was *chanoine* of the Sainte Chapelle, and greatly devoted to the study of the writers of antiquity. Ninon entered into this study with very great interest ; for Gedouyn traced in the mythological fables of Paganism emblems of the operations of a Divine power and an admirable system of natural philosophy. These speculations fascinated the mind of Ninon ; she was prone to take up theories of this nature, and, later on in her life, to reason and philosophize upon them. "*Il fallait l'entendre dogmatiser,*" says Madame de Sévigné. "*C'était une philosophe,*" says another writer, "*mais une philosophe très aimable.*"

Whatever were the errors of Ninon, she was certainly a remarkable woman, and a very distinguished one in her day. The opulent society of the Marais, the rank and fashion of the court, the most celebrated of the *beaux esprits*, *littérateurs*, poets, marshals of France, dignitaries of the Church, etc., met in her *salons*. Women of the highest rank formed part of her circle, and were on intimate terms with her. And why not ? On the score of morals, the court of "*la belle dame du Marais*" could well bear comparison with the court of Anne of Austria ; while, in point of attractiveness, the intellectual conversation and

spirituel passe-temps of the society of the former were far above comparison with the dreary, idle gossip that formed the chief delight of the ignorant and indolent queen-regent, and wearied the circle that assembled at the Palais Royal.

No wonder that the sudden disappearance of such a luminary from its orbit should have caused a sensation in the world of fashion, or that its shining forth again in full splendor should have been hailed with intensest satisfaction. But Ninon did not immediately after leaving the convent reopen her "painted saloon;" her loss was too recent, her grief still too poignant. When she did so, an anecdote relates (anecdotes should always be received with suspicion) that the increase in her circle was so great, owing to the numerous new introductions—or, as they should perhaps be termed, presentations, for there was some ceremoniousness observed on such occasions—that much jealousy was felt in rival *salons*, where there was, in consequence, a great falling off in the attendance. It was resolved to mention the circumstance to the queen. "*Cette Ninon*," she was told, "had, by her seductive arts, attracted to her house all the *grand seigneurs* of the court, and the most desirable *partis* in the kingdom."

The queen-regent was shocked—nay, alarmed—to hear of the arts of "the bewitching philosopher of the Marais;" for to her philosophy meant *diablerie*, and her piety at once took fright. Immediately she despatched an officer of the guard, with an order to Ninon to retire to a convent. She suggested that of "*Les filles repenties*," but conceded to her the liberty of selection. The queen's messenger was very graciously received by the culprit, who was surprised

while dining with her friends, St. Evremond, Rochefoucauld (then Prince de Marsillac), the young Huguenot Count de Coligny, Mdme. de la Sablière, and Mdle. de Scudéry. She read the queen's order to her guests. The gentlemen were indignant; the ladies astonished and terrified. But Ninon, treating the order as a jest, said "she was duly sensible of the honor conferred on her, and that she had no hesitation in selecting for her retreat one of the pavilions and gardens of the monastery of the 'Grands Chartreux;'* if her choice met with approval."

The officer, presuming on the general affability, and not infrequent undignified familiarity of the queen, ventured to repeat, with a smile, Mademoiselle Ninon's exact reply. But Anne was horrified, and exclaimed angrily, "*Le monastère des Grands Chartreux ! mais, la vilaine !*"

The captain of *les gardes*, M. de Gentaut, who was a friend of Ninon, perceiving that the queen was really displeased, stepped forward and assured her that "Mademoiselle de Lenclos' answer could have been no message intended for her majesty. It was mere *badinage*, in reply to an order she probably had treated as a joke, as she was a lady held in great consideration, and deservedly so, from her many attractions and estimable qualities."

The testimony of M. de Gentaut was confirmed by M. de Voiture and other gentlemen who were present, and a few of the ladies. The queen, who had begun to fear that she would be troubled to take

* This monastery occupied an immense extent of ground. Its founder was St. Louis. Each monk had a separate pavilion, which, with the numerous outbuildings of the monastery, the extensive gardens, and spacious church, formed almost a small town. The space is now covered with houses and streets.

further steps in the matter, lent a gracious and willing ear to the praises of Ninon, complaining only of having been importuned by the *criailleries* of the envious to offer an affront to a lady of such very high merit—a lady possessing the esteem of “*les plus grands seigneurs de la cour*,” and even honored with the friendship of the severely virtuous Duc d’Enghien, the cynical Prince de Marsillac (then in great favor with Anne), and, above all, by that of M. de Voiture and the learned ladies of the “*société polie de l’Hôtel de Rambouillet*.” And so Ninon received no further order to “go to a nunnery—go.” “*Le moyen*,” says Madame de Sévigné, on another and later occasion, “*de n’être pas flattée de l’estime de M. le Prince, d’autant plus qu’il ne la jette pas à la tête des dames*.”

Another circumstance also told greatly with the queen in favor of Ninon. It was known that she had long set her heart on converting her Huguenot lover, De Coligny. Anne of Austria, of course, attributed this to religious zeal; but, unfortunately, Ninon would have been satisfied with his formal abjuration of Protestantism, without any real renunciation of faith in its doctrines. Coligny was ambitious, and that opportunities of distinguishing himself might more readily be afforded him, she employed all her powers of persuasion to draw him into the flock of “the faithful.” She did not prevail, perhaps because she argued in favor of disingenuousness and against her own principles; for, according to her guiding system of philosophy, she professed to hold falsehood and deceit in abhorrence. She, however, gained with the queen some additional credit—which probably she would have been unwilling herself to accept—for her attempt to convert Coligny, whom her majesty pitied for his blindness and obstinacy.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Convent of Val Profond.—The Abbey of Val de Grace.—Mansard's Original Design.—Education of the Young Princes.—Lamothe Le Vayer.—A Princely Education.—Two Terrible Turks.—The Duties of Piety.—The Royal Brothers.—The Court at Fontainebleau.—The Swedish Ambassador.—The Daughter of the "Ice-King."—Cartesian Philosophy.—The Ambassador Perplexed.—His Troubled Spirit Soothed.

SOON after Anne of Austria had abandoned the Louvre, and made the Palais Royal her residence, she set about the accomplishment of her vow to found a religious house as a thank-offering to God for the birth of a son. She had already established, in the Faubourg St. Jacques, the Benedictine nuns of the convent of Val Profond ; but as the sympathy of Louis XIII. was not with her in her project, its full realization was necessarily deferred. The original plans for the magnificent church and abbey of Val de Grace were prepared by François Mansard, under whose superintendence the building was begun. Louis XIV. laid the first stone of the church. He was seven years old when this, his first public act, was performed. Some cabal against Mansard caused him to discontinue the work ; alterations were introduced into his designs, and four other architects completed the edifice. The whole of the elaborate decorations had reference to the birth of Christ, and were intended to convey allusions to that of Louis XIV. The fresco paintings of the

cupola were by Mignard. They contain two hundred figures, representing the various orders of saints adoring the Trinity, and, in the midst, the queen and St. Louis offering to the Deity the model of the church of Val de Grace.

The paintings of the communion chapel were by Philippe de Champaigne. The magnificent sculptures of the dome were by Michel Anguier, an artist of great talent. The French excelled in sculpture, as the beautiful work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in the Louvre, attests, and that still existing in churches, in the few remaining hôtels of the *noblesse*, and even here and there in some house of less pretensions, which has hitherto wholly, or in part, escaped destruction. The celebrated group of "La Crèche," now in the church of St. Roch, belonged to the church of Val de Grace; it stood under the baldachin, and was considered the *chef-d'œuvre* of the sculptor, François Anguier. This beautiful church was used as a warehouse from the time of the revolution until 1826; the abbey was transformed into a military hospital. François Mansard, its first architect, on being deprived of the superintendence of the building of the edifice, erected for M. de Guénégaud, at his Château de Fresne, a small chapel, a *bijou* of its kind, representing, in miniature, the original design of the church of Val de Grace.

But while Anne of Austria's sumptuous thank-offering to God was rapidly advancing towards completion, the child whose birth had called forth this pious gratitude was growing up neglected and ignorant. Education of some kind was needful for the king and his brother, and this caused her very great

embarrassment. While infants, she had expressed an intention of having them "instructed in every science ;" a few years later she was in doubt whether the sciences were an appropriate study for princes, and was inclined to think Latin more worthy the attention of youthful royalty. History, or geography, she had no idea of herself ; it therefore never occurred to her that it was needful to burden the brain, or weary attention, by acquiring the knowledge of any history except the historiettes and intrigues of the court. She believed that Mazarin was, of all men in Europe, the most able, the most learned, and the most *spirituel* ; therefore, the most competent to decide on the course of study best adapted for her sons. To his tender mercies, therefore, she left them.

Mazarin chose first, for the post of governor to the young king, the Marquis de Villeroy. He had held high command in the army, was supposed to be well acquainted with the interior condition of the kingdom—knowledge then possessed but by few—and to have some ability as a statesman. Villeroy desired the rank of Maréchal de France, and received it, together with his appointment of governor. It was not, however, for his merits that it was conferred, but to ensure his acquiescence in the views of Mazarin. For preceptor, he selected Beaumont de Péréfixe, Archbishop of Paris, and the author of the most attractively written life extant of Henry IV. It was intended for the edification of his pupil, and is a pleasing but fanciful portrait of the dissolute monarch, the roistering *vaurien*, whose failings, if, according to the archbishop, he had any, were but "*les faiblesses d'un homme aimable.*"

As the duties of M. de Péréfixe were almost nomi-

nal, the young king received for the first year such casual instruction as M. Lamothe Le Vayer, who had been named preceptor to Philippe, the king's brother, had inclination or time to impart to him. Le Vayer was a man of much talent, engaged in abstruse literary and scientific studies. Among the learned he gained some reputation by his work on "La vertu des Païens," in which he strove to confute the idea, then prevalent, that the morality of the modern, or Christian world, was of a higher tone than that which predominated amongst the pagan nations of antiquity—a task of no great difficulty then, or even in this virtuous age, one would imagine.

Le Vayer soon discovered that Louis was far less intelligent than his younger brother Philippe, and, on the education of the former being transferred to the charge of another preceptor, was disposed really to interest himself in developing the talent he believed he had discerned in his youthful pupil. But the watchful eye of Mazarin was upon him. The *rusé* cardinal's design was that both brothers should receive "a princely education." That of the one destined to ascend the throne was to be "monarchical and Catholic;" which meant that, before all things, it was to be constantly impressed upon him that he was a king, therefore "a being essentially superior to other men." "*Qu'il doit avoir pour but la gloire et pour moyen la force ; que la nation réside toute entière dans la personne du monarque ; que les sujets doivent obéir sans contrôler les décrets du roi,*" etc.

"What could you be thinking of," said Mazarin to Le Vayer, "when you proposed to make a clever man of the king's brother? If he had more learning than the king, would he not be able often to put

him to the blush, and would he then be disposed to obey him ?”

Such are the base and narrow views attributed to Mazarin, and the conduct of the king and his brother in manhood was the natural result of such a system. Villeroi, when he became thoroughly initiated into Mazarin's views, expressed much regret that he had not sooner been aware of them, and is said to have endeavored, in some measure, to counteract them by engaging the young king in conversation, and in that way interesting him in things it was desirable he should be instructed in. The princes were not even taught to read until they had become so thoroughly idle and indisposed for study that there was no longer any fear of their using such knowledge to acquire information for themselves. They were left entirely to the charge of sub-tutors, who, to every remark on the backwardness or idleness of these children, were always able to reply that “the Superior,” Mazarin, “reserved to himself the right of regulating the course of studies to be pursued by their royal pupils.” A translation of Cæsar's “Commentaries,” and another of Florus, were published in the names of the king and Philippe d'Orleans, though neither of them understood a word of Latin, nor scarcely could write his own name. Both, then, read French with difficulty, and orthography was never mastered by Louis XIV.

They both acquired the worst habits, from associating with the lowest servants of the household—pilfering, scratching, fighting, lying, and using gross language ; Philippe being by no means an obedient subject, in his youth, to his high and mighty brother. The education of *un grand seigneur* was then com-

prised in dancing, riding, and fencing. If he knew anything more, he owed it generally to a natural bent for the acquirement of knowledge, rather than to facilities afforded him for obtaining it. Learning was for the *canaille*, as "*la grande reine*" was pleased to call the lawyers, the magistrates, and others to whom a course of study at the university or colleges was necessary. Hence the contempt so long felt by the empty-headed *grande*s for men of letters, and which the Marquise de Rambouillet helped to abolish.

Anne of Austria was fond of her children, and proud of their aptitude in acquiring the accomplishments befitting *les beaux cavaliers*, for they could ride and dance already, and were anxious to have the foils in their hands. Louis was her favorite, as the inheritor of the "right divine." She herself instructed him in the duties of piety, showed him her collection of reliques, explained whence they came, their value in the sight of Heaven, and the benefits innumerable they brought down on their possessor; knowledge which she believed to be of far greater importance to him than any that a preceptor or tutor could impart. He learned very early the etiquette of the court, the profound homage due to his own sacred little person, and was initiated betimes into the ceremonies of "the public toilette," by being invested with the privilege of presenting the queen's chemise. When he left the royal presence, he joined his brother, even more neglected than himself, and together they made a raid on the cupboards and store-rooms, and stole cakes, sweets; etc., which they ate in secret, observing, doubtless, no etiquette or ceremony whatever while enjoying the fruits of their joint petty larceny. Thus these young princes grew up like

plants running to seed, without care or culture, for no moral restraints were imposed on them, no moral principles inculcated ; but, on the contrary, every effort was made by the myrmidons of Mazarin to destroy any germ of good that might appear in them, and to implant evil in its stead.

The queen-regent's infatuation for Mazarin cost her the good opinion of the people, and her excessive anxiety to make him popular had but the effect of intensifying the ill-feeling with which they already regarded him. There were signs of France being ill at ease under the rule of one who was often called "*le serpent qui avait succédé au tigre*;" there were indications in another country of a people being roused to rebellion by tyranny, and a threatening of revolt against the oppression of rulers becoming epidemic in Europe. This was displeasing to Anne ; it occasioned anxiety, disturbed the even tenor of her life. All had gone smoothly since her accession to power ; life had glided on, day succeeded day in a delightfully pleasant if somewhat monotonous round. She resolved to change the scene, and to seek undisturbed quiet at Fontainebleau.

The principal change in the daily programme was that the queen and the ladies and gentlemen of her court and household, after promenading in the sand and dust of the forest, spent a few hours in the shallow part of the Seine. The princes and their governor were of the party—" *La modestie*," says Madame de Motteville, "*n'y était nullement blessée*"—for both ladies and gentlemen wore grey linen chemises reaching to the ground. They chatted and promenaded, the conversation being "*gaie et libre*," while the more lively of the party danced and sang.

The Comte de la Gardie, the ambassador of Queen Christina, followed or accompanied the court to Fontainebleau. He appears to have taken with him a new state carriage which Christina had ordered from the king's coach-builder in Paris ; and while the bathers were engaged in their frolics in the water, M. de la Gardie favored them with a *grand spectacle* on the banks of the river. The Swedish queen's coach, in all the splendor of new velvet, gold and silver fringes and embroidery, and drawn by six richly caparisoned horses, attended by twelve pages in black and yellow silver-laced liveries, went trotting up and down, followed by the ambassador himself, in an equipage scarcely less splendid than that of his royal mistress. Two portly coachmen, to match the size of the carriages, as well as numerous attendants, on foot, in the orange and silver liveries of the court, completed this effective and splendid "turn-out." It gave the spectators a high idea of the grandeur and state of Christina of Sweden.

Christina, then in her twentieth year, was celebrated throughout Europe for her learning ; all the heroic virtues of the illustrious women of antiquity were also attributed to her, so that her ambassador was readily believed when he proceeded to descant on her extraordinary attainments and virtues, as surpassing all that renown had spread abroad concerning them. De la Gardie was himself a personage of unusually lofty pretensions. Christina, in opposition to the advice and entreaties of Oxenstierna, had put the country to an inconvenient and unnecessary expense in sending a splendid embassy to France, and, at the head of it, with princely appointments,

this favorite, whom alone she thought worthy of representing a royal mistress so distinguished.

"Instead of making men die of love for her, as she might have done," so the count told the queen-regent and her ladies, "she made them ready to hang themselves with shame and disgust when, bowing before the might of her masculine intellect, they were compelled to confess what poor weak creatures, in comparison with her, they were." This account of the daughter of the "great Ice-king" was received by the fair dames the ambassador addressed with profound awe and respect. He told them further, that the Swedish queen had fully considered Descartes' system of philosophy and could not give it her approval.

This astonished the queen-regent; she expressed much surprise and even some regret to hear it. She, however, knew nothing of Descartes or his system; his philosophy was not the rage of the *salons* until several years later, and at the time referred to only some especially philosophical *bleue belle* of the Rambouillet circle could have been interested in it or professed herself a Cartesienne. But Anne had heard of another celebrated lady to whom had been applied the term "learned and *amiable* philosopher"—a lady who, while willingly receiving homage to her intellect, did not forbid lovers to die for her. The most distinguished of the *grands seigneurs* and *grandes dames* of the court had but lately sung in chorus the praises of this "*amiable* philosopher," and—as the queen remembered with satisfaction—prevented some indignity from being offered to her.

Now Anne of Austria felt no sympathy whatever with the *severity* which the Swedish ambassador attrib-

CHAPTER XXIII.

**Musical Art in its Infancy.—The Band of Les Mousquetaires.—
A Promenade Concert.—Celebrities of the Court.—De la
Rochefoucauld.—The French Navy.—Les Beaux Mousque-
taires.—Le Comte de Coligny.**

At the period we are writing of, music as an art was in its infancy in France. The voice of Angélique Paulet may have had fatal effects on envious nightingales ; it may have filled other listeners with wonder and delight, as its thrilling tones lent beauty to some simple French or Spanish air, supported, or rather accompanied, by the tinkling of the graceful and pretty, but feeble lute—for this was the highest effort of musical art then attained in the *salons*, and to have accomplished so much was to enjoy, as she did, social reputation as a musician. The *théorbe* was merely a lute of larger size, and was sometimes used with the violins, which were greatly in request, to play lively airs to give animation to the *ballets* then in vogue, and in which there was as much acting as dancing. Lulli was still in his native Florence, whence soon after, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, he was brought to France by the Chevalier de Guise, whom Mademoiselle de Montpensier had asked to find her an Italian page.

Military music one can scarcely imagine to have been very inspiring. “The music of a march,” it is probable, shed little, if any, “joy on duty.” We indeed hear of the Duc d’Enghien, when about to

besiege Lerida, opening the trenches to the accompaniment of a band of violins, and we are at once transported, in fancy, to the bloodless scene of some operatic combat, rather than to the scene of war's alarms and the din of real battle. But who has not heard of "*les beaux mousquetaires*"—"mousquetaires noirs; mousquetaires gris; mousquetaires de la reine"? These "crack corps" were chiefly composed of very fine gentlemen, but, as a rule, *un peu mauvais sujets*. They were as exclusive as the famous 10th—"they didn't dance." But they had a band of cymbals and trumpets. There is a sort of roughness and clang to the delicate ear even in the name of those instruments, and a band of such music would seem to be more likely to excite than to "soothe the savage breast." Yet the gallant mousquetaires not unfrequently sent their band to the gardens of La Place Royale, to give pleasure to the many bright stars of fashion and beauty who resided in that favorite *locale*. And in skilful hands the sounds produced by cymbals and trumpets may be so modulated as to produce a pleasing effect.

At all events, they pleased the fair dames of that day, and whenever these concerts took place, the gardens were thronged. What a pretty and picturesque scene to look down upon from one of the broad balconies of the *Place*! What a display of feathers and lace, long strings of unwrought pearls, and silken stuffs! what a variety of colors, bright as the flowers in the *parterres*! How graceful the hoods and hongrelines, and what elaborate *coiffures*! All those frizzings and curlings, *rouleaux*, ribands, and lappets must need much time and skill to erect and rightly arrange. But time was of small account

then. Dressing and gambling and being adored comprised the whole duty of woman, and there was plenty of time for that. The dresses are really superb. "*Les dames de qualité*," says Sauval, "spend more in gloves and fans and trimmings, and such like *galanteries*, than foreign princesses expend on themselves and their whole household."

All the celebrities of the court might be seen promenading in the Place Royale when the mousquetaire cymbals and trumpets performed. There is Madame la Princesse, more haughty than ever, and the hero of Rocroi at her side; there the beautiful Madame de Longueville, with the Comte de Coligny—Ninon's *cher ami*—in assiduous attendance upon her. This excites much notice and comment, and many significant glances are exchanged amongst the ladies. There, sauntering together, are the Duchess de Montbazon and her humble servant, the Duke de Longueville; the Marquise de Sablé, too, and her friend De la Rochefoucauld. She is building a house for herself within the precincts of Port Royal; by no means to retire from the world, but to enjoy society or to devote herself to religion, just as she may feel inclined. She has many habits and traits of character in common with the queen; she is desperately idle, has an excellent appetite, and is fond of pampering it, and, like Anne of Austria, thinks that "*babelle galanterie*" and devotion should walk hand-in-hand; but she has had more education than the queen, and is fond of literary society. She is distinguished for "*les belles manières*," and is especially prone to construct "*maximes et pensées*."

La Rochefoucauld looks as if he were not well pleased; he has a surly air. St. Simon has told us

that a morose, proud temper was a characteristic of his family. Just now he may be excused, for he has reason to be displeased with the queen, towards whom both he and Beaufort-Vendôme were inclined to display much chivalric devotion. But the cardinal stepped in and prevented Anne from fulfilling the promises she had made of giving La Rouchefoucauld the governorship of Normandy. She looked coldly on him, too ; no longer bestowed on him one of those smiles that Madame de Motteville tells us were so irresistible. La Rouchefoucauld resented this treatment, and joined "*Les Importants*," the party opposed to Mazarin. Beaufort was the chief of this party. He had desired to be placed at the head of the admiralty. The cardinal refused to gratify him ; he thought him incompetent, and disliked him for his popularity ; generally, too, the duke was considered fit only to play the part of "*un héros de théâtre*." But as the entire French navy then consisted of but two or three rotten vessels, no great ability was needed to direct that department of the state. Beaufort was indignant, and became the cardinal's enemy.

But look once more at the company. There is Mademoiselle Ninon, and she is escorted by her friend St. Evremond and a dashing *mousquetaire noir*. She wears a violet dress with a woven-in pattern of black and gold. France had begun to be famous for those thick rich silks. Several of these mousquetaires have ridden up to join the gay throng from their barracks, or hôtel, as it is called, on the road to Charenton, just beyond the Bastille. They leave their horses and their large riding-cloaks—which cover up their horses as well as themselves—with their servants, who wait their return outside on the

Place. Nearly the whole of the *mousquetaire corps* are Gascons and cadets of good family ; for in Gascony the younger sons have to seek their fortune in the world. They are a dashing set of men, rather boastful in Gascon fashion, fond of vaunting their prowess, and success in sunning themselves in the light of bright eyes and ladies' smiles ; but they are overflowing with valor, are generally good-tempered, and bear a resemblance—more or less marked—to the popular Gascon king.

They wear black or grey short coats, a large cross on the breastplate, like the ancient Templars, felt hats with a flying plume, wide pantaloons, with high wrinkled leather boots and large brass spurs. They are extremely well lodged in a spacious hôtel with fine gardens and ample stabling. It has a fencing saloon, a riding-house, and a *cour d'honneur*. They are favorites—very great favorites—in this fashionable faubourg of the Marais ; and it is not without reason they bear themselves with that jaunty air you may remark as they join the *beau monde* in the garden, and lift their plumed hats with that self-assured smile to the brightest belles, seeming to ask—with no doubt of the reply—"Are we not charming fellows?"

The trumpets and cymbals have come to the end of their programme, and the company begin to disperse. The princes D'Enghien and De Conti have decamped with their mother and sister. Young De Coligny passes over to say a few words to Mademoiselle Ninon, who is not the least in the world displeased that he has transferred his attentions to the beautiful duchess, though she knows he has lately obtained leave to sigh at her feet "*en galant et honnête*

homme." He excuses himself for not joining her sooner, but with a gay yet somewhat derisive laugh she "bids him go lie at the feet of his duchess, and sigh there, and die there, too, if he choose." Her *calèche* drives up ; St. Evremond and her mousquetaire friend hand her in. Coligny follows in the train of Madame de Montbazon, who lives in the Place Royale, and with whom many of the promenaders have returned, to converse, play picquet, and amuse themselves during the rest of the afternoon. Poor Coligny ! and he really has to die for his duchess. Alas ! that the musical comedietta of the morning should result in a tragedy.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Mysterious Billets-doux.—To Whom do they Belong?—Rival Belles.—A Tale of Turpitude.—The Lover and the Husband.—Public Apology Demanded.—Difficult Diplomacy.—A Doubtful Peace.—Dispersion of “Les Importants.”—Coligny Challenges De Guise.—A Duel on the Place Royale.—Death of De Coligny.—“Argentan et Ismanie.”—Triste Renown of the Duchess.

THE young Count de Coligny remained but a short time in the *salons* of the Duchess de Montbazon. Soon after his departure, a lady of the company picked up two letters that were lying on the floor, and handed them to the duchess. They were without either signature or address, were written in a feminine hand, and proved to be love-letters, rather impassioned in style, for the duchess made no scruple of reading them for the general amusement of the guests. Curiosity was piqued. “Who could have written them?” “Who was the recipient?” “Had any of the company who entered with her left the Hôtel?” Several had left. “But the last to leave,” exclaims the duchess with unconcealed delight, “was Maurice de Coligny.” “Unawares he must have let them fall from his pocket,” says another. “To whom *could* they belong but Maurice?” cry two or three voices in chorus. “They are his, I am certain; but who is the writer?” says Madame de Montbazon, malignantly, and almost in a whisper, as she casts her eyes searchingly round the *salon*. The Duke de Longueville happens to be absent,

which is rather unusual, so persistently does he haunt the Hôtel de Montbazon.

The duchess, therefore, in a tone intended to suggest rather than to assert, says "*La belle des belles?*" The sympathizing *grandes dames* smile significantly their assent—a smile difficult indeed to describe, but one readily imagined by all women who have been present (and where is the woman who has not?) when an absent acquaintance, or friend, if you will, of whom a little jealousy was felt, has been maligned.

Madame de Montbazon had been jealous of the young Duchess de Longueville from the time that her marriage was first announced with the duke, though he had made no effort to break from the chains in which she still held him. She believed that all the beauty of the court paled before her own; but to her secret horror she was verging on that period of life the French are pleased to stigmatize as the "*terrible quarantaine.*" Her possible rival was yet in her teens, and this was not a pleasant thought to her. When she heard that smallpox had attacked the beautiful bride, she looked anxiously for her reappearance in society, not doubting but that the name so generally given to her of "*la belle des belles*" could no longer be applied, except derisively. How then was she mortified when compelled to acknowledge that the dreaded scourge of beauty had swept over her rival's lovely face without leaving a trace or an impress discernible, even to her searching eyes. But her faithful *cicisbeo* continued unswervingly to dance attendance upon her, which might have been gratifying had not the young duchess—while showing utter indifference to it—maintained her "*grande réputation de vertu et de sagesse.*"

Madame de Montbazon was not of the Rambouillet circle, but she well understood the theory of the "*amour chevalresque*,"

" En ciel un Dieu,
En terre une déesse,"

and that "*les honnêtes et galants hommes*" were merely "*amants inoffensifs*," illustrative of the idea, gaining increased prevalence in polite French society, that woman was a superior being, to whom the homage of respectful admiration was to be unceasingly offered. The letters that had fallen into her hands breathed a different spirit from that permitted to the high-flown chivalry in vogue. They were compromising to the writer, and the writer, it was boldly asserted in all the *salons* of the party "*des importants*," was the Duchess de Longueville. As the story travelled from *salon* to *salon* of the Place Royale to the court, it became a terrible tale of turpitude, all malignant suspicions and suggestions caught up on its course being added to it as ascertained facts.

When the letters were found, the real culprits, Madame de Fouquerelles and the *beau* Marquis de Maulemont, were present. The latter dared not claim them, and acknowledge that he had just then carelessly dropped them. It would have compromised the lady, who was in a dreadful fright lest her handwriting should be recognized. The marquis, however, confided his secret to La Rochefoucauld, who had some influence with Madame de Montbazon. Having assured her that an *éclat* was imminent that would have unpleasant results for herself, as it could be proved beyond doubt that neither the duchess nor Coligny had aught to do with the letters,

La Rochefoucauld begged her earnestly to place them in his hands. Alarmed on her own account, she entrusted them to him. They were then shown to the Prince and Princess de Condé and their sons ; to the Duc de Longueville, Madame de Rambouillet, Madame de Sablé, and, last of all, to the queen, in whose presence, the innocence of the young duchess being fully recognized, the letters were burned—greatly to the relief of Madame de Fouquerelles and her lover, who had suffered agony of mind from fear of detection, and were well content to leave the innocent to bear the ignominy they had escaped.

The duke, desirous of sparing annoyance to his mistress at the expense of his wife's reputation, advised that no further steps should be taken in the matter. Madame la Princesse and her sons were not so leniently disposed. The reparation, they said, must be as public as the offence, and the family must withdraw from the court if the queen and her minister did not undertake to avenge their injured honor. " Were the feelings of the granddaughter of a cook to be put in comparison with the honor of a princess of the blood !" The "*importants*," however, headed by the Duke de Guise, endeavored to dissuade the queen from yielding to the Condé party. The Duchesse de Chévreuse, step-daughter of Madame de Montbazon, supported the claim of the princess, reminding Anne of her services to her when her own honor was called in question. The queen hesitated ; but Mazarin could not afford to make enemies of the hero of Rocroi and his family. His opinion was favorable to them, and was, of course, law to the queen.

The Duchesse de Longueville, when this unexpected storm broke over her, retired to a country house be-

longing to the family, at La Barre, a short distance from Paris, to hide from the world her grief and vexation. There the queen visited her, and consoled her with promises of protection and satisfaction for the insult she had received.

All the *finesse* of the cardinal, and the skill of that practised *intrigante* the Duchesse de Chévreuse, were exerted to prepare satisfactorily the apology, and the harangue that was to form the reply. It taxed their powers to the utmost. Every word underwent a long discussion before they agreed to accept or reject it. No public act involving the fate of nations ever needed for its satisfactory adjustment more skilful diplomacy. And the cardinal at the same time was doing his utmost to induce the opposing parties to come to a private explanation and arrangement. In vain he employed his winning tongue to induce one side to acknowledge too much, the other to accept too little. Again he and Madame de Chévreuse, with as much assiduity as if their own welfare and the happiness of their lives depended upon it, applied themselves to the task of arranging a peace on terms that should gain the approval of their clients.

At last a form was produced. The queen insisted on its acceptance. Madame de Montbazon was to go to the Hôtel de Condé, and there, in the presence of the whole Condé family and their intimate friends, was to protest that "she had never for one moment given any credit to what had been said respecting the letters and their supposed writer. The virtuous life of the Duchess de Longueville was so well known to her, that she could only attribute the slander to *les méchants esprits*." That she might omit no word

of this short address, it was written, and, to refresh her memory if necessary, attached to her fan. She chose to read it, and in so haughty a manner, and with an expression so satirical, that the princess felt more offended than satisfied by it. She also omitted to address the princess as "Madame." The cardinal being present at this scene as witness on the part of the queen-regent, insisted, the princess having complained, that Madame de Montbazon should recommence the address and go through it again; which accordingly was done, though with considerable reluctance on the part of the culprit.

Few could surpass the Princess de Condé in haughtiness, and in her most crushing manner she replied: "Madame, I accept willingly your assurance that you have had no part whatever in those malicious reports lately circulated; deferring in this matter to the commands laid upon me by the queen." The princess also obtained the queen's permission to refrain from appearing at any place, on any occasion, when the Duchess de Montbazon was present. But the duchess sought every opportunity of appearing publicly where she knew the princess was likely to be, and refused to leave the Jardin de Renaud when a private request that she would do so was sent to her by the queen. The consequence was a letter from the minister, signed by the young king, ordering Madame de Montbazon to quit Paris.

This was more than her lovers and friends and the partizans of "*les importants*" were disposed quietly to allow. They resented it as a disgrace due to the insinuations of Mazarin. A plot was organized to displace him. It was whispered into the ear of the queen. Roused to energy by the monstrous audacity

of the rebels who menaced the cardinal, she ordered the arrest of their ringleader, the Duke de Beaufort, and his transfer from the Louvre to Vincennes. The Bishop of Beauvais, who had entered into their scheme, was invited to repair to his diocese, and the Dukes de Vendôme and Mercœur were ordered to their estates. Suspicion falling also on the Duchess de Chévreuse, she was banished to Touraine, and Madame de Chateauneuf to Berri. Thus, the "*important*" party being scattered far and wide and the Condé set triumphant, the troubles and civil dissensions that were so seriously to disturb the reign of Anne and her minister were deferred for awhile.

But where all this time, it may be asked, was Maurice de Coligny, whose name had been associated in this scandal with that of the young Duchess de Longueville? Poor Maurice had been ill. His father, too (Maréchal de Coligny, Duc de Châtillon), had been of opinion that he should hold aloof from this complicated scandal, lest he should further compromise the duchess. Restored to health, the young count disregarded the opinion of his family, and appeared on the scene to challenge somebody. One of the most devoted *serviteurs* of Madame de Montbazon was the Duke de Guise. He had warmly espoused her quarrel, but had refused to join Beaufort's plot against Mazarin. As the cardinal had always means of discovering the opponents of his power, as well as those who were neutrals (for of friends he can scarcely be said to have had any but the queen and the child-king), De Guise, though of the "*important*" party, had not been interfered with.

Neither the Duc d'Enghien nor Coligny could challenge De Beaufort, who was safely locked up at Vin-

cennes ; the former, therefore, allowed Coligny, as his name had been mixed up in the affair, to demand satisfaction from Madame de Montbazon's champion. De Guise accepted the challenge. Unfortunately, Coligny was an unskilful swordsman, De Guise an able and practised one. Duelling had long been strictly prohibited. Richelieu had issued an edict which decreed the punishment of death to the duellist who had mortally wounded his adversary, and he had rigorously enforced it. Yet the practice was continued, and with very slight abatement. Coligny was the great-grandson of Admiral Coligny, one of the first victims of the St. Bartholomew massacre, and the Duke de Guise the great-grandson of the Guise who, on that fatal day, was of the party that murdered the admiral.

Braving the edict, they selected the Place Royale for their meeting. When their seconds handed the swords to them, De Guise, addressing Coligny, said—alluding to the wars of the League—“ *Nous allons venger les anciennes querelles de nos maisons, et on verra quelle différence il faut mettre entre le sang de Guise et celui de Coligny.*”

Coligny was soon disabled by his more skilful adversary, who, when he had thrown him to the ground, put his foot on his sword and said, “ *Je ne veux pas vous tuer, mais vous traiter comme vous méritez, pour vous êtes adressé à un prince de ma naissance, sans vous en avoir donné sujet.*” He then struck him with the flat of his sword-blade.

Roused by this indignity, the wounded man raised himself by a great effort, threw back his adversary, disengaged his sword, and the struggle was renewed. De Guise was wounded in the shoulder, but speedily

overcame Coligny, who was deeply wounded in the sword-arm. Coligny was carried to the house of the Duc d'Enghien, and both combatants were cited to appear before the parliament for infringing the edict prohibiting duels. The Duke de Guise replied, haughtily, he should appear, but with a *cortège* of princes and *grands seigneurs*. The Duc d'Enghien announced that he should accompany his friend the Count de Coligny. But poor De Coligny's wounds being unskilfully treated, amputation of the arm became necessary. Being too weak to support the suffering then attending such an operation, he died a few hours after it, full of grief and lamentation at having so unworthily defended the honor of his house and that of *la belle duchesse*.

The duchess is said to have witnessed the combat, concealed behind a curtain, from one of the windows of the Hôtel de Rohan, in the Place Royale. The Prince and Princess de Condé blamed Coligny for provoking a duel he had not the ability to sustain, and the public voice generally was in favor of De Guise. The affair, from first to last, caused the greatest sensation throughout France. In Paris it was the engrossing subject of conversation with all classes of society ; but the court and the *salons*, in discussing it, added many imaginary circumstances to the actual romantic facts and tragic ending of this dramatic episode of the court life of old Paris.

It furnished the subject of a romance that was prepared in great haste, and produced before general interest in the affair had begun to decline. It was entitled, " L'histoire d'Argentan et Ismanie." The demand, small as were its merits, exceeded even the expectation of the writer and publisher, and taxed

the resources of the printer to supply it. While Coligny was yet living, the contemptuous jest was current in society that he had begged his life of his adversary, who, with a sneer and a kick, had granted it. Under the windows of the house where the duchess was supposed to be secluded was sung the *chansonnette* that might have also been heard in every corner of Paris :

“ Essuyez vos beaux yeux,
Madame de Longueville,
Essuyez vos beaux yeux,
Coligny se porte mieux.
S'il a demandé la vie
Ne l'en blamez nullement,
Car c'est pour être votre amant
Qu'il veut vivre éternellement.”

The Coligny party had also their songs in dispraise of Guise, so that old feuds and dissensions were revived, and with something of the old bitterness, from the circumstance of the duellists being the descendants of the two most illustrious combatants of the wars of the League.

The sad event gave a kind of *triste* renown to the Duchess de Longueville. Her name became popular amongst the lower as well as the higher ranks of the Parisian people. She was young, she was beautiful, and of spotless reputation ; she had been maliciously slandered ; the heir of an illustrious house had died in defence of her honor ; and lastly, and above all, perhaps, she was the sister of the gallant youth who had snatched the laurels from Spain and revived the military glory of France. It was this renown which invested her name with a halo of false glory, and excited enthusiasm particularly amongst the populace, when they welcomed her as the heroine of the Fronde.

CHAPTER XXV.

Preparations for the Public Fêtes Suspended.—A Defeat, a Victory, and a Death.—Constancy Rewarded.—The “ Carte du Pays de Tendre.”—Woman’s Social Equality Recognized.—Rambouillet on the Wane.—Claire Angélique d’Angennes.—A Duel by Torchlight.—Salons of Madame la Princesse.—Sévigné at Rambouillet.

ANNE of Austria had intended that a series of public *fêtes* should be given in celebration of the victory of Rocroi, and in honor of the young general and the army that had won it. But so entirely had the Coligny-Longueville affair occupied the time and attention of the queen, the minister and the court, and the minds of the people, that the preparations for these national rejoicings were entirely suspended. The excitement having in some degree subsided, they were ordered to be renewed. Again, however, the festivities were deferred ; for scarcely had the Duke d’Enghien received the felicitations of his friends, and the thanks of the queen, than news arrived that Turenne had been defeated at Marienthal.

With all speed the duke returned to the army, and offered battle to General Merci on the plains of Nordlingen. Fortune again favored the French army, and their victory was a decisive one. The distinguished Spanish commander-in-chief was killed. His conqueror buried him, with full military honors, near the battle-field, and placed on his grave a Latin inscription, signifying, “ *Arrête, voyageur, tu*

foules un héros.” Following up his successes, as before, the prince besieged and took Dunquerque, which then first fell into the hands of the French.

At Nordlingen the young Count de Pisani was killed—a severe blow to the Rambouillet family, and to their circle generally. Voiture, who was deputed to compliment the duke on his victory, was utterly unable to do so, from emotion, so deep was his grief for the loss of his friend—the participator in most of his jokes and frolics, and whose regard for him was great and sincere. The *réunions* of the marquise were, of course, for some time interrupted, and, when resumed, were less frequent than before, for the loss of her son was naturally an abiding sorrow with her.

But Julie d’Angennes is at last to become Duchesse de Montausier. The duke has wooed her for full thirteen years, and youth and the best years of life are fast slipping away—for Julie is now thirty-seven and the duke thirty-four. It was then as unusual as now to find the amiable and attractive daughter of a rich and noble French family unmarried at that age. It has been said that the lady, before bestowing her hand, compelled her lover to pass through all the gradations of the tender passion prescribed by the code of laws that regulated the sentimental chivalry and love *à la mode* de l’Hôtel de Rambouillet; to which a sort of guide was furnished by the famous “*Carte du Pays de Tendre*” of Mademoiselle de Scudéry.

But this is an error. A very sincere attachment existed between the duke and Mademoiselle d’Angennes, as the constancy of both attests. The only obstacle to their marriage was the duke’s Protestantism, and it was a formidable one, removed only by

his abjuration. It does not appear that he was influenced by any material change in his religious convictions. Henry IV. said "a crown was worth a mass;" the Duc de Montausier thought the hand of his Julie worth no less. Doubtless both those renegades found arguments that readily silenced the scruples of conscience; for conscience is a good, easy, tractable creature, until the deed that first disturbed her be done, when she often begins to fret and to sting in good earnest. As to the "Carte du Pays de Tendre," it was surreptitiously obtained, and, to the great annoyance of Mademoiselle de Scudéry, published, with the view of bringing ridicule on the *société polie* or *précieuse* of Rambouillet—*précieuse*, a word recently invented, then signifying a person of good breeding and distinguished manners.

On this map of the progress of the tender passion was first marked the "Lake of Indifference," whence you looked on the shores of "Disinterested Pleasure"—the pleasure the mind derives from first gazing on a beautiful object; in this case, a fair lady. Thence the road was traced to the "Hamlet of Respect," and onwards to the villages of "Billet-doux," "Billet galant," "Jolis Vers," "Complaisance," "Soumission," "Petits Soins," "Assiduité," till you came to the larger villages or small towns of "Empressement" and "Sensibilité," leading direct to the city of "Tendre," on the "River of Inclination," which flowed into the "Mer Dangereuse." There, after tossing about, "from the base of the wave to the billow's crown," if you did not get wrecked, or founder in a storm, you had a chance of finding at last the "Haven of Rest," which, of course, meant marriage. It was silly, no doubt; but

it was intended merely as part of an evening's amusement for five or six friends. It was quite in harmony with the overstrained chivalric notions that found favor at Rambouillet, and which were encouraged with the object of suppressing the shameless depravity so long sanctioned by the example of the Valois and of Henry IV., and to introduce respect for woman and purity of life. The Hôtel de Rambouillet and its stately hostess deserve to be celebrated ; for it was in the famous *salon bleu* that the pleasures of social intercourse were first realized in France, and learning and mental gifts met with their due appreciation. There, too, the French first recognized the social equality of woman, while the blameless life of the marquise set an example to her sex, which, if all her society did not follow, all were there compelled, by putting on the semblance of doing so, to honor. For accomplishing so much in the midst of depravity and a demoralized court, the few affectations of the Rambouillet circle may be pardoned.

Amongst the *beau monde* of the Marais there was decidedly more sociability after the death of Richelieu. Other *salons* were then opened in the hôtels of the *noblesse* for the reception of "*la société polie* ;" and subsequent to Nordlingen, both Rambouillet and its marquise were considered to be on the wane. When Julie became Duchesse de Montausier, though she and the duke resided at the Hôtel for two years after their marriage, yet the *habitues* of the *salon bleu* dropped off by degrees ; not from its loss of *prestige*, but because the receptions were but occasional, and had then to be announced. The marquise, too, began to lose her love of being always surrounded by a brilliant throng of the stars of the *beau monde* and the

élite of the world of literature. She had lost both her sons ; Julie, one of the great attractions of the Hôtel, would soon be leaving her ; and the Marquis de Rambouillet, who for years had been constantly employed in foreign missions, had lately returned home in failing health. There, however, remained yet an unmarried daughter, Claire Angélique, the youngest of the family, and for the sake of this lively coquette, who eventually became the first wife of the Comte de Grignan—afterwards the son-in-law of Madame de Sévigné—the *salon bleu* was not yet finally closed.

This sprightly young lady—whose wit and beauty are celebrated by Madéleine de Scudéry in her great romance of “ *Le Grand Cyrus* ”*—was a very fascinating flirt, with a brilliant complexion and magnificent eyes. She had none of the staidness and reserve of Julie, and was introduced into the Rambouillet circle only when its influence, from the less frequency of its *réunions*, was on the decline, Claire being many years younger than her sister. Full of gaiety, yet capricious and imaginative, “ it was difficult to please her,” says her friend Madéleine. She found the “ *société polie et littéraire* ” prudish, stilted, wearisome, and complained of it so naïvely, so charmingly, that while all who heard the story of her *griefs* were amused, all sympathized with and admired her. Until she married M. de Grignan—whose third wife, also a difficult lady to please, to describe his ugliness, borrowed Guillérague’s *mot* on Paul Péliçon : “ *Qu’il abusoit du privilège qu’ont les hommes d’esprit* ”

* Vol. vii. p. 264. Julie and her sister are there described under the names of Philonide and Anacrise. The character also of the Duc de Montausier is given under the name of Mégabates.

d'être laid''—Mademoiselle Claire appears to have been willing to receive admiration from whatever quarter it came.

Voiture, whose wit and lively sallies pleased her, fought a duel on her account with the Intendant of Madame de Rambouillet, a Monsieur Chaventré. He, as well as Voiture—though neither had any serious intentions—"paid homage" to the younger Mademoiselle d'Angennes. Voiture thought this presumption, and did not choose to allow it; he therefore sought a quarrel with his rival, and a duel was the result. It was fought at midnight—the combatants being lighted by torches—and Voiture was wounded in the thigh. He wrote an account of it to his friend the Comte d'Avaux, and confessed that he was rather ashamed of himself.

But Voiture was always ready with his sword, as was the fashion of the day. While at Brussels, on some business connected with the affairs of the Duc d'Orleans, he fought a duel by moonlight with a Spaniard with whom he had been gambling, and suspected of cheating him. He was constant to the end in his attachment to the scene of his regeneration; but he was often away from the capital, engaged in diplomacy, and other uncongenial business of the state incidental to the places of trust and honor thrust upon him. Georges and Mademoiselle de Scudéry were both gone to Marseilles, and the *salons* of Madame la Princesse were thronged since the brilliant military exploits of her son and the triumph of her daughter. The appointment of the prince to be president of the queen-regent's council had also given influence and power to the Condé family, as one of the channels through which places

and pensions were to be obtained. The princess was, therefore, more frequently seen in her own *salon* or at the Palais Royal—before or after “*le petit conseil*”—than, as formerly, in the *salons* of Rambouillet.

The marquise, however, continued occasionally to receive a distinguished circle for three or four years longer, and it is probable that Madame de Sévigné, who was married in 1644, may have sometimes been present at those *réunions*, which then so rarely took place, but for which invitations were on that account the more eagerly sought. Somaize has included Madame de Sévigné's name in his “*Dictionnaire des Précieuses* ;” her connection with Rambouillet was, however, of the slightest. The famous Hôtel would seem to have accomplished its mission, and virtually to have ended its career with the marriage of Julie d'Angennes.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Victories of the Duc d'Enghien.—The Court Envious and Alarmed.—“Veni, Vidi, Vici.”—The Duchess received by Turenne.—Her Conquests at Münster.—Death of Monsieur le Prince.—His Splendid Funeral.—Italian Opera Introduced.—The Queen's Piety Vexes Mazarin.—Mademoiselle de Montpensier.—Louis XIV. and Prince Charles.—The Rival Beauties Reappear.—La Belle des Belles Triumphant.

MAZARIN and his adherents had begun to look with jealous eyes on the ascendancy acquired by the Condé family in the councils of the state and in the esteem of the people. No name was so exalted as that of the Duc d'Enghien. His brilliant victories—due no less to ardor, that inspired his troops with courage, daring as his own, that quailed before no dangers or difficulties, than to able generalship—excited the enthusiasm of the nation. The Duchesse de Longueville, whose influence was paramount in her own family, had her part also in the homage publicly paid to her distinguished brother. “A friendly word, or a smile of approval, from the *belle duchesse*, was coveted as if some sovereign good would result from it,” and no sort of court favor, or gift of fortune, appeared to be valued unless it came from a member of the Bourbon-Condé family, in whom all the grandeur, the glory, and the gallantry of the period then centred.

It seemed time to withdraw the young hero from the scene of his victories ; for Mazarin having imbued the weak mind of the queen with his own vague

suspicious and fears, the court felt a secret alarm ; bore uneasily the grand airs of Madame la Princesse, and looked with envious eye on the social pre-eminence to which public opinion had raised the Duchesse de Longueville. A detachment of raw troops—ill-equipped and ill-paid—was hastily assembled, and D'Enghien recalled from Flanders to take the command and proceed to Catalonia. He besieged Lerida, but without success. In his absence, the troops of the empire grew bolder. The Archduke Ferdinand threatened Artois and Lens, and it became necessary to summon back the hero of France with all speed.

Demonstrations of enthusiastic joy welcomed him when he rejoined his army. His comrades-in-arms, who had been victorious under his leadership, hailed his return with delight, and, like the renowned hero of antiquity, young Louis de Bourbon "came, saw, and conquered." His battle-cry was "*Amis ! souvenez-vous de Rocroi, Fribourg, et Nordlingen !*" and Lens was added to the number of his victories. The archduke barely escaped being made prisoner. The Imperialists and Spaniards who composed his army fled in disorder. Five thousand prisoners, numerous standards, many field-pieces, and the battle-plain strewn with the dead, attested the decisive nature of the victory. Gaston d'Orleans, meanwhile, had taken Gravelines ; and Turenne, Landau.

Peace became possible, and the Duc de Longueville, with the Comte d'Avaux, was named to attend the congress of ministers. The duke lingered awhile in Paris—he waited for his duchess, whose head was a little turned by the successes of her brother, and the adulation of her train of humble adorers. She was immersed, too, in the pleasures which the wild

joy of the Parisians had led them to indulge in, notwithstanding the frightful distress that prevailed. But peace—peace would rectify all. The duke, urged to proceed to his post, set out alone. After a short interval, the duchess, accompanied by her step-daughter, followed her husband, who at last seems to have fallen in with the general opinion, that Madame de Longueville was to be set on a pedestal and worshipped.

They were attended by a numerous escort of cavalry, commanded by le Comte de Martigny, Lieutenant des Gardes, and the duke came as far as Wesel to meet the duchess and his daughter. Turenne then commanded on the Rhine. To do honor to the "*belle des belles*," he received her with his army ranged in order of battle, and, to gratify her, the troops manœuvred before her. Turenne had the reputation of being "*très sensible à la beauté*," as well as an able general, and the beauty of the duchess did not fail to make a deep impression upon him. He had not seen her since she had had the smallpox, and the only difference he finds in her, as he says in his letters to his sister, is, that "she is more lovely than ever"—"*d'une beauté surprenante*."

At Münster she was received with honors that might have gratified the hero of Rocroi and Lens himself. Infantry, cavalry, flags and banners, with all the military and diplomatic grandees assembled there, were waiting her arrival. It was a triumphal entry, and there was in her train no more humble follower than her husband. The scales had fallen from his eyes, and he wondered at the blindness that had made him a worshipper of the mature charms of Madame de Montbazon and insensible to those of the

youthful divinity he now adored in his wife. Terrible havoc her beauty made of the hearts of the wily diplomatists. It is wonderful, rivals as they were for her smiles, that they ever agreed on that Peace of Münster. They were certainly a long time about it, and probably the distracting beauty of Madame de Longueville was the cause.

The Comte d'Avaux, Voiture's friend, and a *bel-esprit* of some note, as well as a clever diplomatist, was quite enslaved by her charms. His letters to Voiture were filled with her praises and accounts of the sensation everywhere caused by her beauty. Her life at Münster was but a succession of triumphs, and, from D'Avaux's reports, she enjoyed them immensely. Her portrait was taken by Anselme Vanholl, and was engraved, together with those of the duke, and the Comtes d'Avaux and Servien. They formed part of the collection of portraits of princes and diplomatists assembled at Münster to discuss the terms of peace. It is not the most pleasing of the few portraits still extant of *la belle duchesse*. It has an expression of weariness and languor. Probably it was the expression of her feeling at the time, for she had begun to weary of Münster and to sigh for Paris. Friends were constantly urging her to return. Voiture, who wrote often, told her that "Rambouillet was longing for the sunshine of her presence," and that "*toutes les ruelles gémissaient de son absence.*"

While she was at Münster, her father died, and the Duc d'Enghien, become Monsieur le Prince, was henceforth generally known as "*le Grand Condé.*" He is described by Voltaire as a man of spirit and probity, when probity was more the exception than

the rule, amongst members of the government. His household, he says, offered an example of economical management that Mazarin would have done well to imitate in regulating the expenditure of the state. Those, however, who were contemporaries of Monsieur le Prince speak very differently of him. He was immensely wealthy, yet extremely avaricious. Madame de Motteville says, "*Il était sale, vilain, avare.*" Tallemant confirms her opinion, in even stronger terms. The queen paid a visit, on the occasion, to the princesse, "*mais plutôt pour se réjouir avec elle que pour la plaindre.*" Madame de Rambouillet, on hearing of his death, remarked that "the day he married the princess, and conferred such high rank upon her, and the day of his death, when he restored her to liberty and left her a large fortune, were the only days of her life with him on which she could be congratulated."

The funeral of the prince was of extraordinary splendor, which gave occasion to much irreverent joking and raillery. It was said, "Surely, the soul of one who had been so excessively penurious and grasping in this world, must be suffering agony in another, if aware of the sum uselessly wasted by the princess on his worthless body."

To amuse the queen and dispel the gloom that had crept over the court—for both Anne and her minister were daily becoming more unpopular—Mazarin introduced opera, and sent to Italy for singers. An opera by Giulio, entitled "*La Festa teatrale della Finza Pazza,*" had been given in the previous year—1645—at the Petit Luxembourg. St. Evermond called it "a fantastic production of poetry and music." He disapproved of it entirely. He says :

"A play sung from the beginning to the end, as if the persons represented had come to the absurd understanding of discoursing in music on the most commonplace, as well as most important, concerns of life, is contrary to nature ; it wounds the imagination, and offends the understanding." "*L'esprit ne pouvant concevoir un héros qui chante s'attache à celui qui fait chanter ; et on ne songe guère à Thésée ni à Cadmus.*"

Mazarin's first attempt to popularize these "*Comédies en Musique, avec machines à la mode d'Italie,*" was not successful. It took place in the small *salon* of the Palais Royal, and greatly wearied the select audience of about thirty persons invited to see it. But on the Shrove Tuesday following, he gave the court an entertainment of the same kind on a larger scale. A Signora Leonora came from Rome to sing the chief part (the opera was "*Orphée*"), and Signor Forelli, a famous machinist, to arrange and manage the changes of scenery (*changements de perspectives*). The costumes are described as rich and elegant. But the piece lasted six hours, and though the change of scenery surprised and delighted, and, from complaisance, all professed to admire, "*on pensait mourir d'ennui.*"

Three times a week and for two successive months this opera was given in the theatre of the Palais Royal ; and the queen, fearing to displease the cardinal, underwent the infliction of being always present at its representation from the first scene to the last. On one occasion, when the opera was so timed that it interfered with her devotions, she left about the middle of the piece. Mazarin took great offence at this, and was further annoyed, almost to the ex-

tent of withholding forgiveness, by her refusal to allow the opera to be played in Lent. The extreme vexation he displayed greatly amused the court. To see him mortified afforded the keenest delight to his enemies, and this insignificant matter, in which the queen had ventured, at the risk of incurring the cardinal's displeasure, to have her own way, became the subject of many a lively jest at his expense, and caused many a laugh in the *salons*.

After the first representation of "Orphée" on the afternoon of the Mardi-gras, a ball was given by the queen. Mademoiselle de Montpensier then made her *début*, wearing the crown jewels, with which the queen with her own fair hands had adorned her. Mademoiselle was then in her twentieth year, and, we are told, "*d'une beauté remarquable*." She was tall, her figure elegant, her complexion fair, and she had fine eyes and a very pretty mouth. She was lively and witty, and her sallies were often keen and cutting. She was of a hasty temperament, and liable to be carried away by her feelings, which was unfavorable to her complexion ; for with every passing emotion the eloquent blood rose and suffused her fair face. Mademoiselle was not wanting in generous impulses, but she was troubled with a most impetuous temper.

On the occasion referred to she was resplendent with diamonds and pearls, scattered over her dress and her hair, and adorning her fair arms and throat. They were attached by narrow ribands—white, crimson, and black—to her dress of white taffetas and lace. They glittered, too, in the bouquet of flowers she wore—her elaborate coiffure being completed by three feathers of the colors of the ribands, drooping gracefully on her neck.

The little king, then in his ninth year, was present at this ball, as was also Charles, Prince of Wales ; for the troubles in England had compelled Queen Henrietta to seek refuge in France. Louis XIV. was not a handsome child. He had just recovered from the smallpox, and was very perceptibly marked with it. His complexion was dark ; he was small for his age, but fat and thick-set. His features were not prominent, and he had the ugly Gascon-Bourbon nose of Henry IV., but not the hooked chin which gave that jovial monarch so comical an expression. His eyes were large and nearly black, his eyebrows strongly marked, and his countenance was rather grave for his years. Already, he gave himself very grand airs, and seemed well to have learned the lesson—almost the only one he readily imbibed or that was diligently taught him—that he was not of the same clay that ordinary humanity is made of.

Louis was dressed in a tunic of black satin, embroidered in gold and silver ; long crimson silk stockings and black shoes with crimson rosettes, deep lace on the ends of his short, loose satin drawers, and crimson feathers in his hat. Young Charles was similarly dressed. He is described as being very dark, with large black eyes ; intelligent in appearance, and very lively. He interested the company greatly.

Madame de Montbazon—who had partly recovered the queen's favor and some portion of her lost *prestige*—appeared at this ball, in a dress elaborately embroidered in seed-pearls. She was in high beauty that night, in spite of the *terrible quarantaine*, then, *bien sonnée* ; but a fine autumn is not unfrequently more beautiful than summer. Her rival, she heard

with vexation, was about to reappear in the *beau monde* of Paris, to shine there with greater *éclat* than before ; as the duchess was declared, by her admirers, to be more beautiful and *spirituelle* than ever. She had seen the world ; she had acquired more ease of manner, and, in a word, was, so they said, “ truly a model of perfection.”

Mazarin got up an opera especially for her gratification ; he flattered and courted all who were favored with her esteem and regard ; and to gain her favor was to become the favorite of fortune. In her *ruelle* all the intrigues against the court were carried on, and gradually she was induced to interfere in those political troubles and dissensions which filled the country with discord, and which, with a little more firmness and energy, on the part of the chiefs of the rebellion that ensued, would probably have produced similar results in France to those of the revolution in England.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Exhaustion of the Finances.—Civil War.—Its Origin.—The Ministerial Grand Coup.—Consternation in Paris.—The Conseiller Broussel.—The Coadjuteur de Paris.—His Reckless Life and Popularity.—De Retz and Mazarin.—Attempts to Appease the People.—The Queen's Ill-timed Mirth.—The Barricades.—Les Frondeurs.—Molé's Address to the Queen.—Henrietta, wife of Charles I.—Broussel's Return to Paris.—End of Act I. of the Fronde.—Modes, à la Fronde.—Goliath the Giant, and Mazarin.

THE finances of the state were at a very low ebb, and money was wanting to furnish supplies to the victorious armies, which, under the Great Condé and other valiant generals, were reaping laurels for France. Arrears of pay were also due to them, some portion of which it was desirable to defray. The revenues of the kingdom, had it been customary to apply them to meet the expenses of government, would have amply sufficed for its requirements ; but since the days of the great Sully, ministers, and *sur-intendants des finances*, had cast economy and probity to the winds, and made it their first duty to enrich themselves and their families. It was easy to invent new taxes, and so long as the people could struggle on under their burdens, of what account to those who inflicted them were the privations and sufferings of those who bore them ? This naturally induced extreme irritation in the minds of the people, and in the parliament, and the result was the civil war of the Fronde ; which was, in fact, but the reaction from that state of forced submissiveness to which the

iron despotism of Richelieu had ground down the nation. Other feelings, other interests, that gave rise to some romantic and many ridiculous incidents, became blended with the primary cause of the outbreak, and rendered nugatory that great popular political movement, which so long defied the authority of the government, and even threatened the court and the country with revolution.

Memoirs of the Fronde are numerous, and the chief incidents of that drama may be readily gathered from them. But of the character, motives, and actions of those who figured most prominently in it, it is difficult to form from them an opinion ; so opposed to each other are the various accounts (for the most part dictated by prejudice, partizanship, or in a spirit of ridicule) of those who took part in its stirring scenes, or were eye-witnesses of them. It would be foreign to the purpose of these pages to enter into any detailed account of the Fronde. But as the Fronde had its heroines, as well as its heroes, it cannot be passed over altogether unnoticed.

Mazarin, who was generally held in abhorrence, had excited public indignation by giving the important post of *surintendant des finances* to the Italian banker, Particelli Emeri ; a man of mean birth and dissolute life, and who, enriched by plundering the state, lived in a style of reckless extravagance that gave considerable offence. His fertile brain invented many new and onerous taxes, and other oppressive measures for supplying the deficit in the revenue. When edicts were issued for authorizing these new imposts, the parliament opposed and declined to verify them. Other courts of justice were invited to unite with the parliament for the purpose of reform-

ing the state, and the proposal being willingly accepted, an "*Arrêt d'union*" was immediately decreed.

The differences between the parliament and the council of the regent continued for some time without any attempt at actual revolt. But the queen, astonished at the presumption of such "*canaille*," desired to give the parliament a lesson, and one so forcible that that assembly of mutinous spirits should thoroughly comprehend that "it was not for rebels to meddle with the concerns of government, and, under the semblance of seeking the public good, fill France with real in place of fancied misfortunes." The favorable opportunity the queen-regent and her ministry were longing for, was supposed to have arrived, when, some time after, the victory of Lens was announced. "Ah!" said the little king (then in his tenth year, and who, if he could not read, was well versed in all the gossip of the court), "how vexed the rebel parliament will be!"

When the colors taken from the Spaniards and Imperialists were brought to Paris, a day was appointed for carrying them in procession to Notre Dame, and for the singing of a solemn Te Deum. The streets were lined with guards, of whom, when the thanksgiving for the victory was concluded, Mazarin made use to effect his and the queen's *grand coup*. This was, to seize and convey to St. Germain the Conseiller Broussel, and, to Vincennes, Charton and Blancménil, the three most seditious and obstinate magistrates of the parliament, as they were considered by the court. "For the first quarter of an hour, consternation seemed to have paralyzed the inhabitants of Paris; the next, all was sadness and dejection. Even the children shared in the general *tristesse*."

Suddenly, however, as one recovered from the stunning effects of a blow, the people arise. All is movement, running to and fro, cries of rage, and shouts of "*à bas le Mazarin.*" The gay shops in the Rue St. Antoine are hastily closed. All business is at an end. Every good Parisian joins the throng in the streets, and adds his voice to those already calling aloud for the release of Broussel—an aged man, held in much veneration for his integrity and uprightness of character. The coadjuteur of Paris, Paul de Gondy—afterwards Cardinal de Retz—apprized of the *émeute*, appears on the scene, to calm the effervescence of the people. He bids them expect the speedy release of Broussel; he then hastens to join the queen-regent in council. He finds every one there, he says, playing a part; "*et la reine, qui ne fut jamais plus aigre, contrefit la douce.*" She was laughing heartily at the account, which two of the courtiers were giving her, of the attempt of old Broussel's housekeeper to prevent the capture of her master, and afterwards, by her cries and lamentations, to incite the people to sedition. But these courtiers well knew, says De Retz, that "the farce, which so greatly amused her, was not unlikely to be followed, very soon, by a tragedy."

After some discussion on the subject, Mazarin asked the opinion of the council as to what course, under the circumstances, it would be best to pursue. "My advice," said one, "is to surrender the old rascal Broussel, either dead or alive." De Retz observed, in reply, that "the first would accord neither with the piety nor the prudence of the queen, but that the second might put an end to the tumult."

The queen, her color heightened by anger, ex-

claimed, "I understand you, M. le Coadjuteur ; you wish me to give Broussel his liberty. But," and she brought her pretty hands dangerously near to his face, "I will rather, with my own hands, strangle him, and all who——" She said no more. For Mazarin, dreading that rage would overcome prudence, whispered a few words in her ear, which had the effect of checking her, and her face readily resumed its wonted calmness of expression. (Enforced reticence of her real feelings for twenty-seven years, had made of Anne of Austria a perfect actress.)

After some further conversation, the coadjuteur was commissioned to go forth and appease the people ; promising them that if they dispersed, and quietude and order were restored, Broussel should be released the next day. The confusion had increased, for the mob was greater, and the pent-up hatred towards Mazarin found vent in terms of opprobrium, applied both to him and "*la dame Anne*." The appearance of their coadjuteur, dispensing blessings on all sides, and accompanied by the Maréchal de la Meilléraie at the head of a troop of cavalry, had on many a soothing effect ; but the task he had undertaken was a difficult one, and twice his life was in danger from those who, in the heat of frenzy, did not, or would not, recognize him. Kind words, persuasion, some few menaces, and many promises, at last prevailed. The greater part of the mob dispersed, to await the fulfilment of the promise of Broussel's release.

The coadjuteur was a popular man. From childhood he had been destined to succeed to the archbishopric of Paris, then filled by his uncle, and which had become a sort of heritage in the Gondy family.

Sorely against his will he had entered the priesthood, and prospective ecclesiastical dignities could not overcome his extreme repugnance to it. He fought duels, he lived a reckless, dissolute life, hoping to be pronounced unfit for the Church. But all in vain ; his escapades were unheeded, and after every combat he remained, as he says, "*avec un duel de plus et sa soutane.*" He believed that he was capable of playing a brilliant part in the world. But not being able to throw off the archbishopric, he applied himself more assiduously to study ; trusting that opportunities might occur when, like Richelieu, La Vallette, and other warrior-priests, who had not thought the sword and the crozier incompatible, his valor and his fitness to command would be proved.

He had become popular in Paris by securing the good opinion of a certain class of persons, who, though so straitened in means that pecuniary aid was acceptable to them, were disposed to suffer in secret rather than beg. A sum of twelve thousand crowns was disposed of among them in his name, by his aunt, who was accustomed to say to the recipient of her bounty : "*Priez Dieu pour mon neveu ; c'est lui de qui il lui a plu de se servir pour cette bonne œuvre.*"

These acts of private beneficence were considered to atone for a multitude of sins. They made him known, too, in his diocese, brought blessings upon him, and secured for him immense popularity. Persons of the most devout life and character, adopting the words applied to him by his preceptor, Vincent de Paul, said, "*S'il n'avait pas assez de piété, au moins, il n'était pas trop éloigné du royaume de Dieu.*"

Both in learning and mental endowments De Retz was greatly superior to Mazarin, and his friends even

thought he might supplant the cardinal in the favor of the queen. Mazarin, though "*maigre à faire peur*," had the advantage in personal appearance; but Anne had once said, in reply to the remark of the Comtesse de Carignan, that the coadjuteur was an ugly man, "He has beautiful teeth, and no man who has a fine set of teeth can be called ugly." Talle-
mant also says, "*Il avait quelque chose de fier dans son visage*." However, the coadjuteur, though he did venture to pay his court to her, and was rather graciously encouraged than repelled, was prevented by his attachment to Mademoiselle de Chévreuse from following up the advantage he was supposed, erroneously probably, to have gained over Mazarin in the good graces of the queen.

On the occasion of the popular tumult he had been desired to appease, the coadjuteur, on returning to the Palais Royal to relate his partial success, was received by Anne and her council with an air of cold incredulity. It had been decided amongst them that the agitation of the people was as little to be feared as a mist that would vanish with the dawn of day. In a satirical tone, but with much smiling politeness, he was desired, by the queen, to seek the repose he must so greatly be in need of after his arduous task. A vast crowd awaited outside the Palais Royal the return of their coadjuteur. He was, as he tells us, "*ce qu'on appelle enragé*;" but again he harangued the populace—twice from the top of a carriage, and once mounted on a large stone—and again he succeeded in appeasing their anger, and averting, for a time, the threatened storm. But in his absence from the council, the cardinal and the coadjuteur's *friends* amused themselves by disparaging him. "Instead

of calming the people," which they declared he had not done and was powerless to do, "he had made vain attempts to induce a seditious revolt;" and so amusingly facetious were they in ridiculing the peculiarities of his gait, and airs of *beau cavalier*, which accorded so ill with his *soutane*, that Anne of Austria went almost into hysterics with laughter. Duly informed of what had passed, and stung to the quick by the ridicule of the queen, whom he had wished to serve; by the mocking compassion of Mazarin, to whom he despised, the coadjuteur turned upon the court and declared that "before the evening of the next day he would be master of Paris."

Become *chef de parti*, Paris armed itself at his bidding. Women put weapons even into the hands of their children, and with that desperate enthusiasm so characteristic of their nation, armed themselves, also, and went forth to add fury to the fray. In the space of two hours two hundred barricades were constructed, on a plan founded on reminiscences of the barricades of the League. Gabions, or barrels, were filled with earth, and retained in their positions by aid of the heavy chains which, at that period, formed a sort of defence at night for the dark narrow streets of old Paris. On one side of the streets they were fastened to the walls by means of *bornes* or blocks of stone, and being stretched across them, were secured by massive locks on the other side. High narrow baskets, filled with sand and stones, stopped up the interstices and formed a sort of intrenchment. Before night near a thousand of these barricades were improvized by the people, who were told off in detachments to guard them.

The parliament assembled: and the minister hav-

ing communicated with them, the President Coigneux, whose views were not unfavorable to the court, was in the act of recommending the assembly to deliberate on the message he had received, when his son, the well-known *bel esprit*, De Bachaumont, said jestingly to his colleague sitting next to him, "*Qu'il fronderai bien l'opinion de son père,*" when it came to his turn to speak. There was a general laugh ; the word found favor, and was repeated from one to another till it had gone the round of the assembly. "*Frondeur.*" It struck them generally as an excellent term, and was at once unanimously adopted by those who intended to have their fling at the court.* On that famous "day of barricades," 27th of August, 1648, the parliament, with their first president, Matthieu Molé, at their head, appeared at the Palais Royal to demand the release of Broussel and Blancménil. (Charton had not been taken.) The statement of Molé to the queen and her council was eloquent and forcible. If it sometimes shocked the ear, it took firm hold of the imagination ; and all who heard it were much impressed by the moderation and justice of Molé's views, and the expediency of yielding to them. The single exception was the queen, who gave way to passion, "*Car connaissant peu elle ne craignait rien,*" and Molé was dismissed with a refusal. Whilst he was speaking, little Louis,

* The distinctive epithet so unexpectedly applied to the civil commotions of that period, no doubt, suggested itself to Bachaumont, from the circumstance of an edict having lately been issued prohibiting a set of youths from assembling in the moats under the walls of Paris, and attacking each other with the *fronde*, or sling and stones. Many accidents had happened from the practice, and in two or three cases death. Fines and imprisonment were therefore decreed to put a stop to it.

who sat beside his mother, and whose haughtiness and sense of his own greatness and authority were far in advance of his years, was agitated and restless ; and proposed to her to command the presumptuous president to be silent, and to have him driven from her presence.

Queen Henrietta, wife of Charles I., was also present, but urged Anne to use gentleness rather than severity. The civil war then desolating England had driven her from her home ; it threatened the stability of the crown—perhaps the life of her husband—and began, as she reminded the queen, in a similar opposition to parliament. The words of Henrietta prevailed with Anne far more than the oration of Molé or the persuasions of the council, for a qualm of fear had passed through her mind. She liked the insipid routine of her indolent life to flow on undisturbed. The release of Broussel and his colleague was therefore ordered. And it was not too soon. Representatives of the trades and guilds had assembled, and threatened that if Broussel were not, within two hours, restored to them, a hundred thousand men would be prepared to demand his release in a different fashion, and that the queen and “ le Mazarin ” would have to go through “ *un mauvais quart-d’heure.* ” “ *Race libertine !* ” exclaimed the queen.

She, however, was thanked for *ordering* the release of the prisoners, but, at the same time, informed that the citizens of Paris would not lay down their arms until Broussel and Blancménil were again among them. The next day Broussel returned to Paris, or, rather, was carried thither by the enthusiastic people. He was an old man of eighty, and was nearly killed, outright, by their suffocating embraces, and

the excitement caused by the uproarious acclamations and frenzied joy of his fellow-citizens and friends. The barricades were destroyed, the shops were reopened, and "in less than two hours," says De Retz, "Paris was quieter than ever I saw it on a Good Friday." Henrietta desired to see the aged Broussel, and to converse with him, thinking she could persuade him to use his influence towards moderating the pretensions of the parliament. But speech with Broussel was not to be had, and the parliament were intent on getting rid of the cardinal.

They had proposed to put in force the decree of 1617, by which the Maréchal d'Ancre was dismissed from his post of minister. It prohibited all foreigners from interfering in the government of the kingdom and their appointment to any office in the state. The court immediately forbade all discussion upon it. The parliament threw it aside, and in its stead passed the singular law that made it punishable to apply to any one the epithet of "Mazariniste," as being the greatest insult that one man could offer to another. The Prince de Condé was then in Paris. Detesting Mazarin, he was on the point of declaring for the coadjuteur's party, when an arbitrary edict of the parliament made him hesitate. "*Le parlement,*" he said, "*va trop vite. Je m'appelle Louis de Bourbon, et je ne veux pas ébranler la couronne.*" However, a declaration—dictated by the parliament and published in the name of the king—re-establishing several ancient ordinances that Richelieu had abolished, was accepted as a sort of peace. It was registered on the 24th of October, 1648. The next day the parliament adjourned; the queen, who had gone to Rueil, returned to Paris, and the first act of the Fronde was

ended. In the second, new characters were to appear on the scene.

Throughout the trouble, suffering, and distress which this outbreak of popular feeling occasioned, there had been a constant succession of *jeux d'esprit*, pasquinades, farcical and satirical plays, *chansonnettes*, etc., publicly sung, recited, and played; printed, and distributed about Paris by thousands. Blot de Marigny and Paul Scarron were, principally, the authors of these witty but scurrilous productions. The "Mazarinades" of "*le petit Scarron*" (a sobriquet first assumed by himself) highly diverted the people; but "*le doux cardinal*" never forgave them, and in after years the poor crippled humorist was, in consequence, refused a pension.

Fashion also took up the Fronde, and "*à la Montauron*" was wholly supplanted by it. Hats, fans, gloves, and kerchiefs were now *à la mode de la Fronde*. Dresses and long hanging sleeves were *frondées*, or slung *à la mode*, not looped. The *petits pains* and the knives and forks also followed the fashion. Even a savory dish *à la Fronde* was concocted by old Broussel's clever cook, and the coadjuteur and his friends were so fortunate as to find an ingenious hatter, who devised a trimming for their hats that bore some resemblance to the popular sling, and had an immense success.

But popular as was that humble weapon of warfare, it proved less effective on this occasion than in the only other war in which we hear of it; that in which David, with a stone from a sling, slew the giant, and spread consternation in the ranks of the Philistines; for the parliament did not kill the cardinal or greatly terrify the court. It may be that the

haughty Goliath bore himself too proudly, and had an overweening disdain for the champion of Israel and his *fronde* ; while the supple Jules Mazarin—though he ventured to stand his ground—bowed his head when he saw the stone coming from the parliamentary sling. Twice, too, he ran away, then returned to the charge, and finally wearied out and disheartened his enemy ; leaving him dispirited and humbled, with his face on the ground, he himself standing upright—not only with no stone in his forehead, but wholly unharmed, and even stronger and more vigorous than ever.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Parliament gives a Ball to the King.—The King's Faithful Lieges.—The Queen's Petite Vengeance.—The Return from The Ball.—La Duchesse de Longueville.—Nanon Lastigue.—A New Scandal.—De la Rochefoucauld.—The Duchess an Ardent Frondeuse.

To celebrate the patched-up peace between the queen and the parliament, it was proposed to give a ball to the king at the Hôtel de Ville, on his birthday. Paris, still, was restless and excited, and the queen declared that she was afraid to pass through it after dark. The ball must therefore take place in the day-time, and also begin at an early hour, for both Louis and Philip loved dancing, and the days were short. This was an arrangement that pleased neither the givers of the ball nor the ladies and gentlemen invited to attend it. They were reasonably discontent, for a ball—usually a melancholy sort of entertainment—is unendurable without the softening beams of artificial light, so becoming to artificial flowers and complexions, and even to the freshness and fairness of real ones. The dresses owe to it more than half their effect ; the jewels a large part of their sparkle and glitter, and the music, itself, borrows from it a charm. Every lady who is skilfully got up likes to be thoroughly and artistically lighted up. When she feels that she is so, it gives zest to her spirits, brings a smile to her lips, and lends new brightness to her eyes. The whole countenance, naturally, is animated, and with animated countenances you have a “ gay and festive scene.”

But to return to the good city of Paris and the Hôtel de Ville : it was represented to the queen that the king's faithful lieges felt hurt at her want of confidence in them ; that, if her escort of *mousquetaires* and *cheveu-léger* was thought insufficient, the principal men of the *bourgeoisie* would form a detachment to accompany it. The queen declined the proffered escort. " She had unbounded faith in the loyalty of the Parisians. There were perhaps a few turbulent spirits yet unsubdued, but whether or not, for the sake of the health of the royal children, it was expedient that the ball should take place by daylight." Nothing more could be said. Preparations for the daylight dance were made. But as it could not take place on the greensward, the *salons* were decorated with plants and shrubs from the *Jardin botanique*, and arranged to resemble as nearly as possible a rustic bower on a large scale.

The occasion was one on which to be absent, without the most valid of reasons, was to give offence to one party or the other. So the ladies patched and painted that morning with especial care. The queen had discontinued the use of rouge when she became a widow, and never resumed it, having discovered that her own natural slight color was more becoming than were the deep tints with which she had been accustomed to overlay it. Madame de Motteville—whose exaggerated praises of "*cette grande reine*" are so suspiciously like covert satire—informs us that the real object of the queen's desire for a daylight ball was the gratification of "*une petite vengeance*." The ladies of the Fronde were particularly distasteful to her, and, as it was customary to rouge very highly when *en grande toilette*, the queen confessed that she

“hoped by this daylight display to inconvenience and annoy them.”

The ball, nevertheless, passed off satisfactorily. It was meant to seal the reconciliation of the queen and the parliament ; to represent a shake-hands after a quarrel, and to attest the loyal feeling of the *bourgeoisie* of Paris towards their king. Night had well closed in before the princes were tired of dancing, and until they were it was not permitted to weary courtier or cit to cry “ Hold ! enough ! ” The royal *cortége* was escorted back by several hundreds of the citizens, bearing torches. Frequent were the shouts of “ *Vive le roi !* ” and a good ear might have detected a response of “ *Point de Mazarin !* ” The queen is said to have heard it, and to have expressed abhorrence of the “ ungrateful *canaille* ” she had been lavishing her smiles upon—“ *ces messieurs du parlement.* ”

The Duchess de Longueville, attended by M. de la Rochefoucauld, appeared at this ball. She was one of the rare *belles* of the period whose beauty would bear the test of daylight. For although there is much talk of beauty in the writings of those days, it is probable that “ the fatal gift ” was accorded to but few. The smallpox made fearful havoc of the faces of the French women, and the prevalence of deformity is remarkable. There was scarcely a family of the aristocracy of which some member, male or female, had not a curved spine, a distorted limb, or other malformation ; owing, most likely, to the common practice of closely swathing the limbs of infants, and of confiding young children to the charge of careless and ignorant nurses, for the first three or four years of their lives. But the beauty, both of figure and face, of the Duchess de Longue-

ville was the theme of general admiration, and apparently it acted as a spell on all, except her husband, who came within its influence. One must, therefore, believe—though her portraits are not remarkable for grace, or intelligent expression—that she was a very lovely woman. It was perhaps difficult to portray the languor of manner peculiar to her, which, according to a contemporary (De Retz), “*touchait plus que le brillant de celles mêmes qui étaient plus belles. Elle avait aussi,*” he says, “*une langueur même dans l’esprit, qui avait ses charmes, parce qu’elle avait des réveils lumineux et surprenants.*”

The duke is described as “an amiable man of *médiocre* abilities.” At Münster, roused by the admiration the duchess excited, and the honors that were paid her, he fell temporarily into the train of her adorers, but was unable to free himself entirely from the trammels of Madame de Montbazon—a beauty also, but of a different type, and the one who, among the many depraved women of the court of Anne of Austria, is said to have “*conservé dans le vice le moindre de respect pour la vertu.*” And there were among them such women as Nanon Lastigue, the daughter of a shopkeeper of Agen. She possessed neither beauty nor wit, and wit and culture—of which Mademoiselle de Scudéry affords an instance—were then formidable rivals of mere personal charms.

But this Nanon was audacious and lively, and she was the mistress of the Duke d’Epernon, who was credited with having poisoned his first wife, the natural daughter of Henry IV. and the Marquise de Verneuil. He afterwards married one of Richelieu’s nieces, and, though she still lived, yet the queen received Madame Lastigue, whom the duke, who was

attached to the court, presented to her. Where he had any authority, he exacted that *les dames de qualité* should yield precedence to his Nanon. He commanded the infantry at that time, and Mazarin, being desirous of securing the Duc de Candale—D'Epernon's son—as a husband for one of his nieces, made a point of seeking his approbation of all promotions and changes in that corps, before confirming them. Further to obtain his favor, he paid visits of great ceremony to Nanon. The courtiers and *grandes dames* followed his example, and the queen was most gracious to her. Still, homage to D'Epernon's "*fille bourgeoise*" was but grudgingly paid (had she been *une dame de la cour*, then, of course, it would have been *autre chose*), and privately Mazarin's conduct excited much indignation and comment. "He will work his own ruin," said the courtiers, "and perhaps even that of the state, in his infatuation for *les beaux yeux* of M. de Candale."

But a new scandal had begun to occupy the attention of this virtuous court. Many fair shoulders were shrugged; many nicely arched eyebrows raised, many significant glances that seemed to say, "Wasn't I right? didn't I tell you so?" were furtively exchanged when *la belle duchesse*, escorted by La Rochefoucauld, entered the *salon* of the Hôtel de Ville. Since the queen had failed in her promise of conferring on the duke the governorship he had asked for, at a time when it seemed that wishes, to be gratified, had but to be made known, he had deserted her party, and, determined on revenge, attached himself to the Prince de Condé. Latterly, he had been most assiduous in his attentions to Madame de Longueville, of whom it was whispered about that "al-

though she had never loved her husband she had at last begun to fear him." But M. de Longueville was an easy, pleasant-tempered man, and, if not a devoted husband, by no means a jealous one. After the Peace of Münster he had been appointed Governor of Havre, but eventually was drawn into taking part in the troubles of the Fronde, and this through the enthusiasm of his wife, who was inspired by La Rochefoucauld.

Her influence in her family was immense. The Prince de Condé thought and acted only as she bade him ; and it was to turn this influence to account, for the furtherance of his own political objects, that La Rochefoucauld sought to find favor in her eyes. He succeeded only too well. His manners were pleasing and insinuating, and he could feign love, though he felt none. "*Ce qui s'appelle amoureux,*" says Madame de Sévigné, "*je ne crois pas qu'il l'ait jamais été.*" He was intensely selfish, and believed all the world to be as selfish and cynical as himself, and his melancholy maxims. He tried to awaken in the mind of the duchess the ambition to become the heroine of a great party. But, naturally of a languid temperament, and fond of admiration, politics very slightly interested her. It required, therefore, the stronger emotion of love to give them importance in her eyes, and to incite her to enter, heart and soul as she did, into his views. He controlled her absolutely ; and, to serve him, she devoted herself ardently, perseveringly, to that section of the Fronde of which he was one of the chiefs—displaying, in the intrepidity and hardihood of her proceedings, a heroism worthy of a nobler object and a far better cause.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Reassembling of the Parliament.—The Flight from Paris.—Mazarin declared a Traitor.—“The First to the Corinthians.”—A Lodging at the Hôtel de Ville.—Birth of Charles Paris.—Les Petits-Maitres.—Turenne joins the Revolt.—Mazarin retires to Cologne.—Condé seeks Aid from Spain.—The Peasantry flock to Paris.—The Siege of Bordeaux.—Turenne and Condé at Gien.—Condé compared to Cromwell.—The Battle of la Rue St. Antoine.—The modern Bellona.—La Rochefoucauld wounded.—Mademoiselle and her Maréchaux.—They enter Orleans in Triumph.—Mazarin banished.—De Retz imprisoned; his Escape.—The Queen recalls Mazarin.—A Heaven-born Minister.

WHEN the parliament reassembled, some very stormy discussions took place; for Mazarin had not fulfilled the terms of the Declaration. He and the queen had determined on leaving Paris secretly. Only Monsieur was made aware of their intention; but when on the point of setting out—at near midnight on the eve of the *jour des rois*—the Duchess de Longueville was informed of it, and invited to accompany the queen. She declined to do so. All being in readiness, the astonished ladies of the household were desired to enter the carriages that were in waiting, and the queen and her minister, the king and his brother, and their attendants, cautiously and quietly, but with as much speed as possible, proceeded to St. Germain.

The royal palaces were at that time but very ill prepared for an unexpected visit. Mazarin had taken the precaution of sending on three camp-beds,

for the use of the queen, the two princes, and himself. The rest of the party, amongst whom was La Grande Mademoiselle, had to sleep upon straw, and so much was wanted that a large price had to be paid for it ; indeed, either for love or money, it was with difficulty procured. Men had also to be sent into the woods to cut fagots, to create a cheerful blaze in the enormous fireplaces, if not much warmth ; the queen and her court, meanwhile, being compelled to wait, shivering, in the bare, cold, carpetless rooms.

Queen Henrietta, at the Louvre, was suffering from the same privation, which was, indeed, a general, though a temporary one. The coadjuteur, paying her a visit a day or two before the siege, found her sitting by her daughter's bedside. " I am keeping poor Henrietta company," she said ; " she is too cold to get up, and no wood is to be had for fires." Mazarin not having paid her pension for upwards of six months, she was reduced to rely on the supplies furnished to the palace ; these had failed, chiefly because the army of the Fronde was absorbing all the serving men, and its manœuvres amusing the serving women. The coadjuteur returned to the parliament, explained to them the queen of England's discomfort from the negligence of Mazarin, and immediately they voted and sent over for her use a sum of twenty thousand francs.

The flight from Paris was thought, by Anne and her minister, to be a very bold and decided step. In a few days they expected to be urged to return. But instead of bringing back the queen and her cardinal in triumph, the parliament, on the 8th of January, issued their famous decree declaring Mazarin

an enemy to the sovereign and to the state, and a disturber of the public peace. All good subjects of the king were "enjoined to fall upon and seize the traitor, whensoever and wheresoever they might come upon him, and to deliver him up to justice."

The coadjuteur, compelled to decide for the court or the parliament, declared for the latter, and carried the regular clergy of Paris with him. Four thousand horse and ten thousand infantry were raised, and were commanded by the Dukes d'Elbœuf, de Longueville, de Bouillon, and de Beaufort (who had recently escaped from Vincennes), with the Prince de Conti as "Generalissimo of the armies of Paris." Monsieur le Duc d'Orleans, who could not make up his mind which side to espouse, to avoid taking any part in the civil war, went to bed and pretended to have the gout. But the revolt was now organized, the gauntlet thrown down, and the siege of Paris, which began on the 9th of January, continued for three months. A regiment, raised at the expense of the coadjuteur, and commanded by the Chevalier de Sévigné, was called the "*régiment de Corinthe*," of which place he was titular bishop. To meet regular troops it went forth in high glee, in all the pride of a showy uniform, flying feathers and banners. At the first check it received, it displayed its valor by discreetly running away, and its prowess was celebrated by the satirical song-writers, as "The first to the Corinthians." Every event of this memorable siege afforded food for mirth and raillery. Amidst general disorder there was general gaiety, light-heartedness, and *esprit*.

Of the chiefs of the revolt, none knew exactly what he wanted, consequently there was no union among

them. This probably saved the crown from slipping from the head of Louis XIV. to that of the Grand Condé, who doubtless, had he made it his aim, might have worn it. But civil war was repugnant to his principles, though circumstances eventually drew him into it.

When Madame de Longueville appeared on the scene, she was about to be confined, and instead of her own hôtel, she selected for the purpose, "in order to give confidence to the people," the Hôtel de Ville. She and her step-daughter (afterwards Duchess de Nemours) were, on their arrival, conducted to the registrar's room, which appears to have been unfurnished, or nearly so. But the Hôtel de Longueville was not far off, and orders were sent thither to bring over beds and chairs for the ladies. Apologies were made for the bad fastenings of the doors and windows. This inconvenience they made light of, but inquired particularly if there were rats in the room. "A few, only," the attendants thought. However, the duchess sent again to her hôtel for three or four cats. On the *fête* of Charlemagne she gave birth to a son, who was christened Charles Paris. The Corps Municipal assisted at his baptism, representing the city of Paris as his sponsor. He was placed in a cradle on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, with a guard of honor stationed near to protect him. The troops defiled, and the various trades passed in procession before him. The *pois-sardes*, and *dames de la Halle*, came to look at this wonderful infant, and to give him a blessing and a kiss. Though it was winter, they brought an abundance of violets and spring flowers, wherewith to deck his cradle, which was entirely covered with their

floral offerings. The duchess, in heroic verse, was compared to the mother of the Gracchi, and to Livia offering her child on the altar of her country.

Charles I. was beheaded at this time, and the event filled the court with consternation. The queen earnestly entreated the protection of the Prince de Condé for herself and sons. The prince considered that his services had been inadequately rewarded ; that the court and the queen were ungrateful ; yet he determined to defend the king against the Fronde. The parliament had been endeavoring to overcome his hesitation, and to prevail on him to give them his support, and their cause the *prestige* of his name. He was now to appear in arms against them, and they did not shrink from the encounter. But so violent had the meetings of this assembly become, that the Duc de Brissac urged the coadjuteur not to attend them unarmed, and brought him a poniard to wear under his *soutane*. The handle of this weapon being on one occasion partly visible, the Duc de Beaufort called attention to it, at the same time exclaiming : “ *Voilà le bérviaire de notre coadjuteur.* ” This, as usual, caused much raillery, and became the subject of many an epigram and satirical couplet.

The Prince de Condé — again dissatisfied, and believing his services insufficiently appreciated—having succeeded in bringing back the queen and her court triumphantly to Paris, immediately after joined the party that ridiculed and contemned them. His brother, De Conti, the Duc de Longueville, and others, separated from the Fronde, and, with the prince, formed the faction known as “ *Les Petits-Maitres.* ” Their object was to overthrow the favorite minister. But Mazarin, by a *ruse*—for the suc-

cess of which the queen was on her knees praying in her oratory, with her son by her side—arrested them in the Louvre, and sent them to Vincennes. Mazarin feared the prince, and declined to set him at liberty, when La Rochefoucauld and the Duc de Bouillon offered, as hostages, to take his place. A proposal was also made to Mazarin to give his niece, Mdlle. Martinozzi, in marriage to the Prince de Conti, and this subsequently, at a more convenient season, he assented to.

Madame de Longueville, in the meantime, fled to Holland, and prevailed on Turenne to turn the army he commanded, in the king's name, against the royalist troops. The pleadings of beauty in tears overcame his sense of duty, great captain though he was. But his second in command, Count d'Erlach, was made of sterner stuff, and so vehemently opposed the orders of his general, and resisted any tampering with the men, that Turenne left his army, joined the Spaniards, who were in arms against France, and "*partout il appelait, et avec succès, les bons bourgeois à la revolte.*" It being feared that he would march on Paris and set the princes free, the Duc d'Orleans—who inclined first to one party, then to the other, but desired to be of neither—suggested their removal to the Bastille. Mazarin and the queen were aware that such a step would too greatly excite the people; therefore, with the utmost secrecy and caution, they sent their captives to Havre.

But all France, and the parliament of the Fronde at its head, demanded the release of the Grand Condé; for the duchess, flying from province to province, had everywhere roused the indignation of the people, and incited them to rebel. Anne and her minister

were compelled to yield ; the latter in person going to Havre to restore the princes to liberty. He was treated with so much contempt, that he did not venture to return, but retired, first to Liège, then to Cologne. The Duc de Longueville gave up public life, and repaired to his estates. Condé was received in Paris with transports of joy. The coadjuteur then became Cardinal de Retz, by the nomination of the queen, which was confirmed the following year by Pope Innocent X., who hated Mazarin, and wished success to the Fronde.

Still civil war raged. The Grand Condé, so lately hailed as the "saviour of France," could ill brook the idea of having been incarcerated, and again set free, at the will of a court favorite ; an Italian priest, abhorred by the nation. Wounded pride resented this insult. He resolved on war—war against "le Mazarin ;" and however parties were divided amongst themselves and split into innumerable sections, all were agreed in crying out "*Point de Mazarin.*" The prince set out from Paris to raise the standard of revolt at Guienne, Poitou, and Anjou, and to seek the aid of Spanish troops. The susceptible Turenne, meanwhile, who had thrown up his command and become a rebel, for the sake of *les beaux yeux* of Madame de Longueville, finding that her smiles were given to another, left the Spaniards and made his peace with the court. As there was no one with equal ability to put in his place, and oppose to Condé, he was pardoned, and restored to the command of the royal army.

Mazarin took this opportunity of leaving Cologne, and returning to France, with 7000 troops he had raised to escort him back, and who wore green, like

his liveries, as facings to their uniform. Immediately, the parliament set a price on his head, and sold his books, his pictures and the furniture of his palace to raise the 50,000 crowns they named as the reward. Lampoons innumerable then appeared, offering so much for his ears, so much for his nose, and so on. Never were misery and mirth so combined as in this war of the Fronde. A party went forth boldly to break down the bridges over which the cardinal and his army were to pass. Several were taken prisoners ; a scramble ensued for their release, which, after some ludicrous adventures, heavy blows on both sides, and plenty of jibes and jests, was effected.

Mazarin, having joined the queen, they also, accompanied by the king and his brother, Mademoiselle, and some ladies and gentlemen of the household, set out to make a tour of the provinces, with the view of kindling loyalty. The queen was not well received ; but the ill-feeling displayed towards the cardinal annoyed her even more than the cold reception she met with herself. The peasantry and provincial *noblesse* had fled to Paris, where tumult and faction reigned. The camp-beds followed the royal party, and were often delayed three or four hours *en route* ; the queen and ladies seeking shelter in wretched inns—the rooms they were shown into having rarely any other furniture than an old wooden table or chair. The king and his brother seem rather to have enjoyed this “ roughing it ” on their journey. “ They amused themselves greatly ; played and fought and learned nothing at all, except that they were very great personages,” though temporarily under a cloud.

Bordeaux was wholly devoted to Condé. His wife and child crossed France, in disguise, under the escort of the Conseiller Lénét, to seek refuge there with her husband. The princess sustained a siege of the city, and all the partizans of the prince were assembled there. He himself was scouring the country, everywhere victorious, taking cities and towns, while his Spanish allies, and the detachments of troops raised by his friends, were pursuing the court, whose only hope was then in Turenne. A part of Condé's army was stationed near him, at Gien, but it was commanded by the Ducs de Beaufort and Nemours, whose continual disputes—ending in a duel in which Nemours was killed—dispirited their men, who knowing that Condé was a hundred leagues off, believed that they should fall into the hands of the royalists. But, in the dead of the night, the sentinels at the outposts in the forest of Orleans are challenged by a courier, and the courier proves to be the great Condé himself. In various disguises, and encountering numerous obstacles and adventures by the way, he has come from Agen to head his army.

The confidence of the soldiers revived. The royalists at Blenau were surprised, defeated, and dispersed, and only the ability with which Turenne, with the troops that remained to him, thwarted the movements of the victorious Condé, prevented him from taking captive the royal party at Gien. Condé, therefore, marched directly towards Paris. The people were rejoicing over the battle of Blenau. But Paris was a scene of anarchy. The soldiers pillaged with impunity, and there were perpetual quarrels between them and their officers. The chiefs

of the Fronde were negotiating, sending deputations, assembling the chambers ; the populace were seditious, and guards were placed at the doors of the monasteries.

Mademoiselle had been a keen observer of all that had passed while journeying from town to town with the royal party. Her report of it to her father, and her admiration of the heroism of Condé, fixed for a moment even his wavering mind. Immediately he assembled troops to oppose the return of Mazarin ; then, alarmed at his own boldness, retired to the Luxembourg Palace. Condé's small army of about 7000 men, officered by the most distinguished of *les grands seigneurs*, was quartered in the Faubourg St. Antoine. Turenne, with about the same number of troops, had brought the court as far as Charonne ; but he dared not enter Paris. The people, alarmed, shut the gates of the city, excluding both armies, and carried the shrine of Ste. G  nevi  ve in procession, with prayers and invocations that the saint would deliver them from " le Mazarin." The coadjuteur become cardinal, was less popular than before, but the *cur  s* of the old city still were prominent *Frondeurs*.

Mazarin compared the parliament of Paris to that of England, and Cond   and his adherents to Cromwell and Fairfax. He found means of conveying to Mademoiselle a promise that she should marry the king, if she would prevent her father from joining the Prince de Cond  . Full half of the royal diadems of Europe had been placed at her feet, and she had rejected them all ; but she was supposed to be very desirous of wearing the crown of France, though she was then twenty-six, and the king but fourteen.

She, however, made a jest of the cardinal's proposal, and replied to it, "*Que la parole donné aux princes on la tiendrait.*"

Then began that desperate battle of St. Antoine, in which the two greatest of French generals, and the *élite* of the *noblesse*, were arrayed against each other, and some of the best blood of France was shed. While the battle was raging, the king and his brother were taken to the heights of Charonne, whence they could obtain a view of it; and the ignorant and selfish queen-regent, who cared naught for the wishes of the nation, or the misery endured by the people, so that her Italian priest could be retained at her side, was praying in a chapel of the Carmelite convent for the success of Turenne, and of Mazarin's partizans. Terror-stricken ladies and children, shut up in the city, fled for refuge to the church of St. Roch, and were in some cases very roughly treated by *Frondeurs*, who were ransacking the edifice in a pretended search for Mazarinists. The *hôtels* of the nobility were entered and pillaged, and lawlessness of every kind reigned in the city.

At the gates of St. Antoine lay the wounded of both armies, and to both admittance was refused. Gaston d'Orleans, utterly destitute of energy of will, and veering from one party to another, according to the views of the last person he had spoken with, remained at the Luxembourg, still irresolute as to what course he should take. His daughter, possessing the force of character wanting in her father, decided that course for him. She presented to him an order to the magistracy to open the gates forthwith. He signed it; and immediately she set out and delivered it. Proceeding to the Bastille, she desired the

commander Broussel, son of the conseiller, to point the cannon and fire on the royal army. They were pointed, as a menace, but Broussel declined to take upon himself to fire them ; she, however, less mindful of consequences, had the courage to apply the match herself. This daring and unlooked-for act spread consternation amongst the soldiers of Turenne, and compelled him to withdraw them. The victorious Condé then entered Paris.

Descending from the Bastille, with a bunch of straw bound on her head, this modern Bellona rode through the city ; crying, "*Ceux qui ne sont pas du parti de Mazarin prennent la paille ; sinon ils seront sac-cagés comme tels.*" None, whether partizans or not, were willing to sacrifice themselves for the hated cardinal ; so that priests and laity, women and children, sought bunches of straw for their hats, to escape the fury of the inpouring army. The conduct of Mademoiselle de Montpensier roused the enthusiasm of the people to such a pitch, that they hailed her as "*fille Romaine*" and "*l'idole du peuple.*" The number of killed and wounded, on both sides, in this battle of the Faubourg St. Antoine (2d July, 1652) was large in comparison with the smallness of the armies. They fought with obstinacy and desperation, inspired by intense mutual hatred, and the carnage was great. A nephew of Mazarin being killed with the royalists, the people thanked St. G  nevi  ve for this proof of her sympathy with the Fronde. La Rochefoucauld, who is said to have fought with great bravery, received a wound, just above the eyes, which for a time deprived him of sight. With reference to this, he parodied the well-known lines in Du Ryer's tragedy of "*Alcyon  e,*"

and addressed them to the Duchess de Longueville :

“ Pour meriter ce cœur qu'enfin je connais mieux,
J'ai fais la guerre au roi, j'en ai perdu les yeux.”

He fancied that she no longer served his interests with zeal, but inclined rather to favor the Duc de Nemours, of whom he was jealous, and who was soon after killed in a duel.

But the opening of the gates of Paris and the firing of the cannon of the Bastille were not the only services of Mademoiselle to the prince she so enthusiastically admired. Another proof of her energy and courage was given in her expedition to Orleans, which city was part of the appanage of her father. The Orleanists had closed their gates to prevent the entry of either army ; but the Council of Paris had determined to take possession of it. Mademoiselle offered to head the *bons bourgeois* for that purpose. “ Many Roman women,” she said, “ had performed similar acts, and why should not she show the people the path of duty ?” Her offer was not very readily accepted. The enterprise was thought to be one unsuited to her sex, and, heroine though she had shown herself, some doubted her discretion.

She, however, prevailed. The Countesses de Fiesque and de Frontignac accompanied her ; also a small retinue and an escort of troops. Mademoiselle and her *maréchaux de camp* were attired *en amazone*, and wore helmets and swords. On arriving at the gates of Orleans, they found there the Garde des Sceaux with a *cortège* of forty carriages. He had been sent by Mazarin to hold the town for the king. But the magistrates of the Hôtel de Ville kept him

outside the gates while they deliberated whether to open to him or not. The question became more difficult and complicated when the princess, also, demanded admittance. She too was kept waiting: becoming very impatient at the delay, she galloped, with her retinue, under the rampart on the side next the Loire. Some admiring boatmen pointed out to her a door in the rampart that had been walled up, and offered to make an opening in it. *Frondeurs* inside, on learning what was going on without, aided from within, and soon the victorious Mademoiselle, her *maréchaux* following her, mounted the breach, entered the city, harangued the people, and was conducted in triumph to the Hôtel de Ville. Young, handsome, and full of courage, her presence and her eloquent words speedily turned the scale against Mazarin's *envoyé*, who, much discomfited, was compelled, with his forty carriages, to return by the way he came.

Thus, this enterprise, which, failing, would have been utterly ridiculous, by its signal success placed a very fine feather in the helmet of la grande Mademoiselle. She assisted at the councils of war, and gave her opinion freely on the conduct of military affairs. She says, with reference to it, "*J'assure en cela le bon sens, comme en toute autre circonstance, règle tout ; et que lorsqu'on en a avec du courage, il n'y a point de dame qui ne comméandât bien des armées.*"

The sanguinary "Journée du Faubourg St. Antoine" was followed by a general demand for the final expulsion of Mazarin. And the queen, that she might be allowed again to enter Paris, once more consented to sacrifice her minister. The king was required to publish a formal declaration of his dis-

missal. This request was also complied with, though at the same time he, or rather the queen, vaunted the services of Mazarin and complained of the injustice of banishing him. As soon as he had taken his departure for Bouillon, the citizens invited the king to re-enter the capital. The court found the city as quiet and orderly as though nothing had occurred to disturb it ; for Paris was under the delusion that it had seen the last of " le Mazarin."

It was not expedient to be rigorous towards the *Frondeurs*, but some few arrests were made, and the Duc d'Orleans was requested to retire to Blois, where he remained for the rest of his life. La Rochefoucauld and other rebel *grands seigneurs* found means of making their peace with the queen. But the Cardinal de Retz was arrested in the Louvre, and sent from prison to prison. He escaped to Rome, and led for some years a wandering life. On consenting to resign his archbishopric of Paris, he was allowed to return to France, where he lived in retirement, in order to pay off the immense debts he had contracted. His character and conduct were changed, and to use the words of Désormeaux, "*après avoir scandalisé la terre, il l'édifia.*" The heroines of the Fronde, in disgrace with the queen and the court, remained in seclusion at their *châteaux*—the duchess, repenting her errors ; Mademoiselle, amusing herself with literature, and enjoying the society of a circle of intimate friends.

But scarcely had the Parisians settled down to a quiet life, exhausted by their nine years' struggle to free France from the yoke of " le Mazarin," than, in the name of the king—who had publicly declared him for ever banished the kingdom—the queen recalled him. He entered Paris, as a sovereign returning to

the capital of his kingdom, and the king and his brother—brought up by their mother to pay him the obedience and respect due to a father—received him as such. The people being weary of resistance, scarcely any opposition was shown towards him. His partizans even managed to have a *fête* arranged for him at the Hôtel de Ville. He threw money with a lavish hand amongst the populace as he passed through the streets, and "*Vive le Mazarin*" at once rose above the cry "*À bas l'Italien.*" He, himself, is said to have expressed contempt for the inconstancy of the people. He urged and obtained the condemnation to death, for contumacy, of the Grand Condé, whom Philip IV. had made general-in-chief of the armies of Spain. Yet, at about the same time, the Prince de Conti married Mazarin's niece, Anna Martinozzi—so inconsistent were the acts of all who were connected with the Fronde.

Mazarin, in fact, reigned once more, and, the spirit of the nation being humbled, reigned absolutely—far more so than ever Richelieu, or any minister of France before him, had done. When murmurs at his oppressive exactions reached his ears, he would say, "*Ah ! laissons crier les poules dont nous mangeons les œufs.*" There was no question of the king in the government of the country, or, indeed, of the queen, whom he was no longer solicitous to please, all power being in his hands. Yet Anne of Austria, in her deep piety, daily thanked God, in her oratory, for crushing and dispersing those enemies of the state, who had sought to deprive France of so beneficent and heaven-born a minister as "*le doux cardinal.*"

CHAPTER XXX.

La Rue de la Tixeranderie.—Le Petit Paul Scarron.—Françoise d'Aubigné.—Mortified Vanity.—Scarron's Offer of Marriage.—La belle Madame Scarron.—Her Brilliant Salon.—Celebrities of the Day.—Les Dames Frondeuses.—Character of Madame Scarron.—Her Desire for "Consideration."—Disappointing when Attained.

IN the Rue de la Tixeranderie, and in one of those old *maisons bourgeoises* of the better class, with angular turrets, of which so few examples now remain in modern Paris, there lived in the time of the Fronde the famous humorist and *bel esprit*, Paul Scarron. And a pitiable object, indeed, to look upon was "*le pauvre petit* Scarron," with his contracted and distorted limbs, and his head bowed down on his chest. He suffered severely from acute rheumatism, brought on by careless exposure to cold and damp in the wild days of his youth. Now, a helpless cripple, he is confined to his house, and is wheeled from room to room in a chair. There is attached to it a sort of desk or table, with writing materials, and when alone he dashes off easily and rapidly, being even as nimble with his fingers as he is ready with his wit—many a keenly satirical couplet and many a bitter lampoon.

During the Fronde, Scarron's house was the headquarters of those lively, scurrilous pamphleteers, of whom he was regarded as the chief. The "Mazarinades" were the product of his pen, and much of the witty and licentious literature of the Fronde was issued under his auspices, when he was not actually

its author. The Fronde divided families, separated friends, and had broken up society. Many of the *noblesse* had fled from Paris ; those that remained, in a great measure, secluded themselves and watched the course of events ; inclining ever to the winning side, whether it were the court or the parliament. Yet, twice or thrice in the week, there assembled at Scarron's all that Paris then contained of the wealthy, the witty, the noble, the learned, and the most distinguished of both sexes. And the attraction was simply Scarron. For, notwithstanding his affliction, and, often, intense sufferings, there was not, perhaps, in all France a man of more gaiety and good-humor, of more sprightly fancy, more varied information, and keener wit, or whose society was more generally liked and sought after.

In 1651, Scarron, then in his forty-first year, married a pretty young girl of sweet sixteen. Compassion for a poor friendless orphan was his motive, a desire to escape the fate of a convent drudge was hers. For Françoise d'Aubigné (afterwards Madame de Maintenon), the granddaughter of the famous Calvinist chief, Agrippa d'Aubigné, having lost at an early age both father and mother, had been received by a distant relative, Madame de Neuillant, who proposed to herself the pious task of bringing the little heretic into the fold of the faithful. With some difficulty this was accomplished. Madame de Neuillant, having saved the soul of her young relative, became anxious to give up the charge of her to any religious community who would be willing to take her without the usual *dot*, towards which her family connections, both Protestant and Catholic, had declined to contribute.

She had been carefully educated by her mother, up to the age of fourteen, and she could embroider with marvellous skill—advantages which Madame de Neuillant considered might be turned to account, and compensate for the pecuniary deficiency. Meanwhile, she made Françoise very useful as a servant. As such, she attended her kind relative one evening to the Rue de la Tixeranderie. She had but lately arrived from Niort. The elegant dresses, therefore, of the free-and-easy ladies assembled at Scarron's, and even the metamorphosis she observed in Madame de Neuillant's *toilette*, made a deep impression upon her, from the contrast between them and her own old-fashioned, shabby attire. The more she surveyed the long sweeping trains, the more she became conscious that her short cotton frock displayed, at least, a quarter of a yard of her legs above the ankles. She blushed with shame and vexation, in the obscure corner she had been permitted to stand in to have a view of the fine folks as they entered. There were silks and satins, and lace and pearls; frizzed *coiffures*, and short curls banded with rolls of false tresses, so different from her own simple coil of dark hair. All looked so stately, so handsome, so happy; and all were treated with so much deference by the gentlemen; whose *toilettes* were not a whit less elaborate than those of the ladies. "Ah! why should not also Françoise d'Aubigné play a great part in the world?"—and she wept and sobbed aloud.

Madame de Neuillant was shocked, and hurried poor Françoise out of sight. But Scarron had observed her, and inquired who that tall fine girl might be, and what was the cause of her grief. Madame explained. Scarron, who was very far indeed from

being rich—though he sometimes received large sums, which he spent so recklessly that his purse was more frequently empty than full—was, nevertheless, kind-hearted and generous. He declared that he would himself provide the poor girl's *dot*, if she had any real inclination for the seclusion of a convent. An interview took place the next day, when, to the horror and indignation of Madame de Neuillant, Françoise expressed no desire, but much disinclination, for the life of a nun. Reproaches and menaces followed. "If she would not be a nun, what then?" The culprit had nothing to say; but Scarron, who had been silent for awhile, replied to Madame's question, "Would Mademoiselle d'Aubigné be his wife?" He was so accustomed to jest, and naturally was so little regarded as "a marrying man," that the elder lady was somewhat annoyed at his ill-timed joke, as she thought it. But Scarron having convinced her that his proposal was made in perfect seriousness, and that, unlike the convents, he would require no *dot*, the question was put to Françoise—"Would she be Madame Scarron?" With a smile and a blush, she unhesitatingly said, "Yes." And so they were married, as soon as Scarron could divest himself of his clerical dignity of Abbé, which he did by disposing of it, to a *valet de chambre*, for a good round sum, which helped to fit out the bride duly to shine in his *salon* as a *belle* of the period.

It had been hitherto the fashion to visit the witty Paul Scarron, who, owing to his infirmities, could himself visit no one. Henceforth it became the fashion to visit the beautiful Madame Scarron. In his letters, he tells of the *grands seigneurs* and *grandes*

dames who daily besiege his house and throng to his poor *salon* in the evening ; and that he and his "*belle amie*" hold quite a court. And it is certain that her natural refinement, and sense of the *convenable*, wrought a change both in Scarron himself, and in the tone of his society. She acquired much influence over him, and, to please her, he abstained greatly from that licentiousness which too generally had characterized his writings, and oftener marred than added force to his sallies of wit.

As the agitation of the Fronde subsided, the society *chez* Scarron became more brilliant and select than when, during the heat of party struggles, noisy pamphleteers and satirists had formed so large an element in it. Men of letters frequented it for the sake of the sprightly conversation of the learned and witty host ; men of the sword and of the gown went there for relaxation ; no longer to discuss public affairs, or to organize a system of opposition to the minister whose power seemed to grow with the resistance offered to it. The ladies patronized the *salon* of the Rue de la Tixeranderie, not only to display their *toilettes*, and to be amused and admired, but by their vivacity, their *esprit*, their conversational powers, and the brightness of their presence, to give zest to the pleasures of the evening.

It was not a second Hôtel de Rambouillet, with its suite of splendid *salons* and wealthy and artistic surroundings, though several of the Rambouillet circle were there ; and probably more at their ease, in Scarron's spacious but poorly decorated rooms, than in the famous *salon bleu* of the marquise. Corneille, modest and retiring ; Chapelain, more pretentious, yet learned and talented, though no genius ; La

Fontaine, simple in manner, and, though in poverty, contented ; the witty Bachaumont also, who named the Fronde, and wrote very pleasant verses ; Nicholas Poussin, then perhaps the greatest painter in Europe—poor in purse, but richly endowed with the poetic imagination of genius, and who excited so much envy in France, whither he had been invited to return, that, disdaining all cabals, he again left it for Rome ; the historian Varillas, and De Bouthillier de Rancé—then translating Anacréon, and leading a life of dissolute pleasure, by-and-by to be followed by the austerities of La Trappe ; Saint Evremond, whose satirical account of the retreat of the Duc de Longueville into Normandy had been rewarded by Mazarin with a pension of three thousand francs. These and many other of the *gens-de-lettres*, and *beaux esprits* of the time, frequented Scarron's house.

Often, too, before his arrest, the Cardinal De Retz might be met there. He then availed himself of Scarron's ready and caustic pen to put forth tirades he cared not to acknowledge, though he approved and disseminated them. Mesdames de Sévigné and de Coulanges, also (the former reappeared in society in 1652 after the death of the marquis and the arrangement of her pecuniary troubles) *frondeuses* both of them, from their family connection with De Retz, and their great regard for him personally. The Comtesse de Fiesque, the Duchesse de Chévreuse, and, in fact, all the society of the Fronde, visited Scarron. Mademoiselle de Lenclos had absented herself from Paris for three years, whilst the troubles of the Fronde were at their height. She had passed them at the Château de Villarceaux, and

her surprise was great, on her return, to find Scarron's poor *ménage* presided over by a young wife, who attracted to it all the *beaux cavaliers* and *belles dames* of the Marais, with whom it was the fashion to extol her charming manners, amiability, and beauty.

Not that Madame Scarron really was beautiful. She was tall, well formed, fresh and fair, and in the heyday of youth—*la beauté du diable*—which, with her assiduity to please, gained for her the patronizing approval of her own sex, and the admiration and homage of the other. She was exposed to many temptations, no doubt, but the coldness of her nature was her safeguard, and, besides, she was looking forward to a position of consideration in the world, as she herself has told us. If she ever loved any one, it was probably the Marquis de Villarceaux. But St. Simon has, in that respect, been particularly unjust towards her. Of her early years he knew nothing, except from the reports of those who were jealous of the influence she later in life acquired at court. The poverty she was reduced to after the death of Scarron, and until she obtained—through the interest of Madame de Montespan—a small pension from Louis XIV., is of itself a denial of the conduct he attributes to her.

Yet neither as Madame Scarron nor Madame de Maintenon did she display qualities that usually excite much love or esteem. She was a model of the *genre convenable*. She had thoroughly studied her own character, and knew what points of it to keep in the shade and what to bring forward for the world's inspection. She prudently availed herself of every opportunity of cultivating her mind, of acquiring knowledge, and during her nine years with Scarron she had had great

facilities for doing so. She was better read than most women of her time ; she wrote with more correctness, and far more elegance, than Sévigné, and might, had she chosen, or had it suited her purpose, have shone as a *bel esprit*, as her letters attest. But her single aim was to rise in the world, to be considered, to be looked up to ; and, to further her aim, she knew how to efface herself in the presence of the rich mediocrities who patronized her in the first years of her widowhood.

As she grew older there was nothing of the sylph in her figure ; she was also large featured, had fine black eyes, and there was a staidness in her manner that harmonized well with her personal appearance. It was neither prudish nor severe, yet not unsuited to the character, she affected, of a devotee. That Madame Scarron fell deeply in love with Louis XIV. when she saw him enter Paris with his bride—as Roederer has suggested—is not easy to believe, or, indeed, that she at any time loved him. She has said that she loved “ consideration,” and was willing to make any sacrifice of feeling to attain it ; and it is likely that, having treacherously displaced Montepan, her hopes after the queen’s death rose higher than before, and that she may have even aspired to sharing with Louis the throne of France.

Her complainings, to her brother, prove that she had not obtained the position she expected to secure by working on the fears of the king. For although, in his anxiety to save his soul, Louis had resolved to lead a more reputable life, being weary of a dissolute one, and had begun it by marrying his fair preacher, he had gone no further, and apparently had no intention of saying to France, as she had hoped, “ Be-

hold your queen !” Her brother, a crazy-headed spendthrift, who cared only to be supplied with money to throw away at the gambling-table, could not understand what his sister still yearned for. “Surely,” he said, “if you so long to die, you have the promise *d’épouser Dieu le père.*”

Poor Madame de Maintenon ! She paid a very heavy price for “consideration”—as she seemed to confess when, arrived at the height of it, she replied to Madame de Caylus’ remark, that “the carp brought to the ponds in the gardens of Versailles languished and died,” “*Elles sont comme moi ; elles regrettent leur bourbe.*” The constraint and servility of Versailles must have been utterly intolerable when her thoughts flew back to the freedom, and the *sans façon* life, of the Rue de la Tixeranderie.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The Duke and Duchess de Montausier return to Paris.—An Epitaph.—The Bride of Vladislas of Poland.—Jean Casimir.—Death of Voiture.—Jean Louis Balzac.—The Prize of Eloquence.—A Presentation Gold Chain.—“Artamène, ou Le Grand Cyrus.”—Dedicated to Anne de Bourbon.—Cyrus and the Princess Mandane.—Description of Marseilles.—Notre Dame de la Garde.—Boileau's Remarks on “Le Cyrus.”—Bossuet Compares Condé to Cyrus.—Novels of Madame de La Fayette.—Succeed the Scudéry Romances.—Smouldering Love of Liberty.

THE Duke and Duchess de Montausier lived in a style of great magnificence in Paris after their return, in 1653, from Angoumois—where the influence of the duke's high character had kept the people in check, and prevented them from joining in the general revolt. They were both warmly attached to the Grand Condé and the Duchess de Longueville, and, personally, despised Mazarin. But as the duke zealously upheld the royal authority, of which the cardinal was the representative, and against which the prince and his sister were rebels in arms, there was an estrangement between the families. Society was reorganizing itself; but no attempt was made either by the marquise or her daughter to revive the glories of the celebrated *salon bleu*. They were extinct; the Hôtel de Rambouillet had accomplished its mission, and finally closed its doors. The marquise survived yet some years, but considering herself very near her

end, and already dead to society, she, in 1654, wrote her own epitaph :

“ Ici gît Arthénice, exempte des rigueurs
Dont la rigueur du sort l'a toujours poursuivie,
Et si tu veux, passant, compter tous ses malheurs,
Tu n'auras qu'a compter les moments de sa vie.”

It is scarcely the epitaph one would have expected from the marquise, who had enjoyed, and continued to enjoy, so large a share of the good things of life, and who still had hosts of friends. True, she had just lost her husband, and of her children Julie alone remained to her. Tallemant, whose intimate friendship with her continued to the end of her life, says, that she was then slightly palsied, from having, when younger, eaten amber, habitually, to preserve the fairness and beauty of her complexion.

Several of the best known of the *habitués* of Rambouillet had died during the agitations of the Fronde. Amongst them was the famous Voiture. He had been requested by the Princess Louise de Gonzague—daughter of the Duc de Nevers—with whose portrait Vladislav of Poland had fallen in love, and, having asked her in marriage, had espoused her by proxy, to attend her while she remained in the capital as her *maître d'hôtel*. This flattered him, for the Polish king had sent an embassy of great magnificence to wait on his queen, with carriages, and an escort surpassing in splendor anything yet seen at the court of France. She was treated there as an empress, and allowed to take the *pas* of the queen-mother. On her departure, Voiture, who stood high in her favor, was invited to accompany her, and as he was *un personnage* in the royal *cortège*, his vanity

and conceit rose to such a height, that it was scarcely possible for inferior mortals to approach him with sufficient respect, while his irascibility increased beyond endurance.

Vladislas was disappointed in his bride. He found her less beautiful than her portrait, and not so young as he had thought her. He had been anxiously awaiting her arrival, and collecting rare diamonds, and pearls of great price, wherewith to deck the peerless young beauty he hoped to present to the admiring Poles as their queen ; but as she did not fully realize his expectations—though she was still young and handsome—he resented the blow to his hopes by treating her with marked disrespect. However, happily for her, he died in the following year, when she married his younger brother, Jean Casimir—a singularly restless character—who, before he became king, was a cardinal. Innocent X., at the instance of his sister-in-law, Donna Olympia, released the King of Poland from his priestly vows. Twenty years after he abdicated, went to Paris, and became abbé of St. Germain des Près, but passed much of his time amongst the philosophers and *beaux esprits* of the *salon* of Mademoiselle Ninon, who had then become dogmatical and sedate.

Voiture had not the annoyance of witnessing the humiliation of the Queen of Poland. Having accompanied her as far as Peronne, he then left her and returned to Paris. His health was feeble, and his extremely irregular life still further injured it. A severe attack of the gout ensued, and as bleeding was then the treatment for every ailment, Voiture was bled till he died. Madame Saintot—the lady to whom the letter that first brought him fame was ad-

dressed—on hearing of his illness, flew to his bedside and was with him to the last. He had gambled away, and squandered in libertinism, nearly the whole of her ample fortune, as well as his own large income. The French Academy went into mourning for him—an honor that is said never to have been conferred on any other member of that distinguished society. Voiture did not write for the public, but Conrart and Ménage collected his numerous letters and a few of his poems. Their success was great, seven editions being required within two or three years. His epistolary style was thought perfect, though it is affected and artificial in the extreme; and as the letters treat chiefly of personal matters, but very rarely of the events of the time, they are now wholly destitute of interest.

He had been for twenty years engaged on a romance. Julie d'Angennes had sketched the plot, and Voiture had named it "*Aludélis et Zélide*," but it was still unfinished when he died. It was his fame as a *bel esprit*, and his pretty graceful sonnets, that made the reputation he enjoyed in his own day.

He left a natural daughter, who had taken the veil, and who held his memory in the greatest veneration. After his death, being desirous of having his portrait placed in her cell, she learned, to her surprise, that it could not be permitted. His life had been too dissipated, too profane, to allow of his portrait being suffered to find a place in the austere and holy retirement of a cloister. To relieve her distress, it was suggested that he should be painted as St. Louis, and thus, under that saintly disguise, the likeness of the sinner was preserved. It was afterwards engraved by Nanteuil.

Another of the writers of the day whose death had occurred was Jean Louis Balzac. As a *littérateur*, he stood higher in esteem with the *gens de lettres* than Voiture ; for the French language owed much to his endeavor to infuse into prose writing some of the harmony which then existed only in the poetic effusions of the time—light and graceful trifles, which, until the great Corneille elevated the genius of the nation, achieved renown for their authors. Indeed, long after Corneille's *chefs-d'œuvre* had appeared, a single sonnet, such as "La belle Matineuse," of De Motteville, sufficed to secure the honor of election to an academic *fauteuil*. Balzac was also celebrated for his epistolary style, which differs from Voiture's in being less familiar and more precise, just as their characters differed. He was Historiographe de France, and the founder of the prize, in the French Academy, for eloquence. The subject proposed to the first competitors for the prize was "Glory," and it was awarded to Madeleine de Scudéry, then esteemed the most *spirituelle* and eloquent of the literary women of the seventeenth century.

Madeleine, indeed, wielded a more eloquent pen than any of her literary contemporaries. It was a fertile and busy one too. Had she even been disposed to give it much rest, her brother Georges would hardly have consented ; for Madeleine's pen was the Providence he looked to to furnish him with the means of obtaining rare tulips, which often cost a good round sum. Then, his cabinet of portraits had to be completed, an account of which he published in a quarto volume. Often, too, Georges met with irresistible temptations, in the shape of wonderfully carved ivories, pictures, bronzes, and other ar-

tistic and expensive trifles. In 1650 Georges' dramatic pieces were considered to possess sufficient merit to entitle him to claim a seat amongst "the forty;" and, a vacancy occurring in that year, he was almost unanimously elected to fill it. He was a popular *vaurien*, "*un peu fanfaron, mais très chevaleresque.*"

Scudéry, having dedicated his "Alaric" to Queen Christina of Sweden, and mentioned in the dedication, in terms of high praise, a person to whom she had once shown much favor, but who afterwards in some way displeased her, was requested by Urbain Chevreau, at the instance of Christina, to withdraw the passage referring to him. Scudéry objected; he had a high esteem for him, and was under some obligations to him as a friend. Chevreau then, in confidence, told Georges that one of Christina's presentation chains, made of the Swedo-African gold, and of the value of 1,000 pistoles, was designed for him, but that he would probably lose it by refusing to expunge the name of the obnoxious person. Georges listened with indignation to this attempt to bribe him, as he conceived, to put a slight on his friend, then exclaimed, energetically, "*Jamais je ne détruirai l'autel où j'ai sacrifié; même pour une chaîne aussi grosse que celle que portaient les Incas de Peru!*"

Both Madeleine and Georges were devoted to the Condé family. Georges had fought at Rocroi, Nordlingen, and Lens, and had followed the fortunes of the prince at Bordeaux and at the siege of Paris. So much was he compromised by his share in the rebellion, that when the Fronde was ended, and the prince entered the service of Spain, Georges was concealed in Paris for some time before he could

escape, as many others did, to Normandy. His sister, during the war, had been employed on her grand *chef-d'œuvre*, that wonderful romance, "Le Grand Cyrus." No work of the kind probably was ever so popular, or brought so large a sum to its publisher—not less, according to the present value of money, than between fifty and sixty thousand pounds. It was printed at Rouen, and published by Courbé of Paris, and was in ten thick volumes, which appeared separately, at intervals of about six months; but the demand for it was so pressing that it was sold in sheets, at an increased price, as they were printed off in the interim.

From one end of France to the other, and by all ranks of people; the court, the *noblesse*, the *bourgeoisie*, by all, indeed, who could read, "Le Grand Cyrus" was read, and, as a French writer says, "*On ne lisait pas seulement, on s'arrachait, on dévorait, à mesure qu'ils paroissaient, chacun de ces dix gros volumes.*" The work was dedicated to the Duchesse de Longueville, and wherever the fortune of war carried her during those eventful five years, from 1649 to 1653, the volumes were forwarded to her. The plates are by Chauveau, the first engraver of that time, and the arms of the princess appear on the frontispiece of each volume. After the death of the Duc de Longueville, and her withdrawal from the world, to expiate the errors she had fallen into through her infatuation for the selfish and unworthy De la Rochefoucauld—who in his "Mémoires" so pitilessly exposed her weaknesses—she wrote to express her gratitude to both Madeleine and Georges de Scudéry for their constant affection towards her, and their warm defence of her character. She no longer wore jewels, or any kind

of personal ornament, but, as a mark of her regard for both brother and sister, she sent them her portrait, set in diamonds.

“ Artamène, ou Le Grand Cyrus” is an allegorical romance, in which, under Persian, Armenian, and other Eastern names, all the principal personages of the latter part of the reign of Louis XIII., and the regency of Anne of Austria, are represented with striking fidelity. Victor Cousin’s “ La Société du 17^{ème} Siècle d’après le Grand Cyrus,” is composed, as indeed its title implies, almost entirely of extracts from it. He gives a key to “ Le Cyrus,” which he met with in the Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal. It is but an imperfect one, an abridgment of the original key, which was made a few years after the first publication of Mdlle. de Scudéry’s completed work, and to which Tallemant refers ; but no copy of it is at present known to be extant.

Le Grand Cyrus is Le Grand Condé, in the vigor of youth and the height of his glory in France, as the conquering general of Rocroi, Nordlingen, Charenton, and Lens, represented in “ Le Cyrus” by the siege of Cumes, the battle of Thybarra, etc. Georges de Scudéry was present at those military exploits, and probably furnished details of them, or Mdlle. de Scudéry derived them from trustworthy reports of the time, as they are said to be faithful accounts of the events, as tested by military history. The Princess Mandane is the Duchess de Longueville—she was afterwards frequently addressed by that name. The French aristocracy, generally, figure in this wonderful story of love, politics, and war ; also other of the author’s contemporaries, of various grades in the literary world, as well as in “ *la société polie*.” Their

adventures, their manners, their dress, their dwellings, are all described. There is Madame de Rambouillet, her hôtel, and its famous *salon bleu*; Julie, and her lovely sister; the Duc de Montausier; Angélique Paulet, Voiture, and the Rambouillet circle generally. "Le Cyrus" is, in fact, a gallery of portraits of the aristocratic society of the middle and earlier part of the seventeenth century.

Marseilles and its provincial celebrities are also described, and the description of the town is said to be a faithful picture of what it was at the time Mdlle. de Scudéry wrote. She had accompanied Georges in 1647 to take possession of his sinecure post of Gouverneur de Notre Dame de la Garde de Marseilles. She calls it "*le plus beau lieu de la nature pour sa situation.*" Their literary reputation gained for them so flattering a reception, that a salute of ten guns was fired in their honor. For "Cyrus" was not the only work of Mdlle. de Scudéry that became famous; she already had written "Mathilde d'Aguilar" and "Célinthe," each in a single volume; and the most perfect, and perhaps the most generally interesting, of all her romances, "Ibrahim, ou l'illustre Bassa," in four volumes. Georges dramatized it, and its success as a play equalled its popularity as a romance. She was also well known at that time as a poetess, and by her "*nom de Parnasse*" of Sappho. But accustomed to the more stirring life of the capital, they soon grew weary of their "exile," as she terms it; and, the governor having no duties to perform, he and his sister returned to Paris. The château of Notre Dame was on a lofty eminence, and very difficult of access. Bachaumont, and the poet Claude Chapelle, who visited it in the course of their

travels in the south of France, speak of it in their rhymed account of "Un Voyage à Montpellier," as

" Notre Dame de la Garde,
Gouvernement commode et beau,
A qui suffit pour toute garde,
Un Suisse avec sa hallebarde
Peint sur la porte du château.
Plus d'une heure le rocher nous grimpâmes,
Ensuite à la porte doucement nous frappâmes,
Des gens qui travailloient là proche
Nous dirent, ' Messieurs, là dedans
On n'entre plus depuis longtemps.
Le gouveneur de cette roche
Retournant en cour par le coche
A depuis environ neuf ans,
Emporté la clef dans sa poche.' "

The salary of the governor was proportioned, it appears, to his duties. Georges said, when the appointment was given to him, that "unless it rained manna at the Château de la Garde, he should die of hunger in that important stronghold. But he liked the style and title. It appeared, in full, in all his works, and on the title-page of *Madeleine's*, which were usually published in his name ; at first, because of the celebrity he had acquired before she began to write on her own account. For many years she had assisted him, and several of the works issued as wholly his, were known to be from her pen.

It is singular that Boileau, in his "Discourse on the Dialogue of the Heroes of Romance," should have reproached *Mademoiselle de Scudéry* — with whom, though born later in the century, he was contemporary—for depicting, in her *Cyrus*, a hero so unlike the *Cyrus* of the Bible promised by the Prophets, or even the *Cyrus* of Herodotus or Xenophon.

As M. Cousin remarks, "How is it that Boileau did not perceive that he was mistaking Mademoiselle de Scudéry for Madame Dacier; that he was laying down rules for an historical work when the question was only of a work of the imagination?" Tallemant des Réaux, who was a friend of the Scudéry and a frequenter of the same society, remarks, that neither the actions nor the manners of the heroes of antiquity must be sought for in "Cyrus" or "Clélia," but a resemblance to them in character, and the faithful portraiture of the models she made choice of to represent them. Her Cyrus was before her eyes—a reality—the hero whose military fame then filled Europe, who had saved France from her enemies, and extended the frontiers of the kingdom. Bossuet, himself, in his funeral oration on the death of the Prince de Condé, compares him to Cyrus, as if in confirmation of the justness of the idea of the romancist. It seems probable that Boileau had never read "Le Grand Cyrus," but had merely bestowed a cursory glance on its seven thousand pages.

According to modern ideas, the writings of Mademoiselle de Scudéry are extremely prolix, affected, and sentimental. Yet they are often lively, the thoughts are ingenious and natural, and the conversations abound in witty repartee. Her sentiments are noble; her works thoroughly moral, and interesting, as pictures of the best French society of her day. They brought her large profits and world-wide fame, for many of her works were translated into several languages. Those that were "Englised by a person of quality" are certainly not improved by the process.

The "Ricovrati" of Padua elected her a member of their society. There was a question of following their example in the Académie Française, and of admitting other learned women as honorary members. The proposal was made by Ménage and supported by Chapelain, but was not agreed to. Woman was already supreme in the *salon*; it was thought dangerous to enthrone her in the *académie*.

Chateaubriand used to say that his mother knew "Cyrus" by heart. This, presumably, was but *manière de parler*. To get the ten volumes of "Cyrus" by heart would have been even a greater feat than to write them. The work was highly esteemed in England, and for a considerable time after the long heroic romances were laid on the shelf in France. Lady Russell said "Clélia," a work of less merit, was "a most improving book." Lady Mary Wortley Montague speaks of "Cyrus," and says that "as a girl she used to devour it, so intensely was she interested in it."

The novels of Madame de La Fayette, which followed the Scudéry romances, though similar in style, are thought by some persons to be an improvement upon them. Probably, being very short, they may have obtained a reading in more recent times, while the voluminous Scudéry stories have scarcely been looked at. After the Fronde, the intrigues of the court, its ceaseless round of dissipation, and the increase of gambling, left no time for the perusal of those romances *de longue haleine* which had, formerly, been the delight of the leisure hours of both *seigneurs et dames*. With the latter, the short romances or novelettes ("La Princesse de Cleves" and "Zaïdé") of the Comtesse de La Fayette found great favor.

But they are insipid and affected ; her heroes are represented as "*chefs-d'œuvre de la nature*"—of itself enough to disgust one with them. The style is negligent, and full of faults which the practised pen of Madeleine de Scudéry knew how to avoid.

With men, both of the *noblesse* and the *bourgeoisie*, romance-reading had, to a great extent, gone out of fashion. Thought had largely developed itself during the eight or nine years of civil commotion. The political pamphlet had contributed towards it, and social and philosophical questions had been discussed with much freedom. And with them the masculine mind continued to occupy itself, rather than with sentimental fiction, though, throughout the reign of Louis XIV. the independence of spirit that had been awakened in France during the Fronde was sedulously suppressed. But despite all the efforts of absolutism to extinguish it, together with the ardent aspiration for liberty it gave rise to, it smouldered on, until, in the attempt to finally crush it, it exploded, and produced the Revolution and the Reign of Terror.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Les Mœurs Italiennes.—Louis Disposed to Break Bounds.—Increase of Gambling.—The Curé of St. Germain.—The Doctors of the Sorbonne.—Mazarin Unmasks to the Queen.—Georges de Scudéry Married.—Friendship Dashed with Sentiment.—Mdlle. de Scudéry's "Samedi."—Les Coteries Précieuses.—The Scudéry Circle.—The Tuesday Receptions.—Madeleine's Paroquet.—"Clélie."—The Pen of Sappho.—Portraits and Entretiens.—"Les Mystères des Ruelles."—Madeleine's Annuity.

UNDER Mazarin, the court and society did not improve, either in morals or manners. After his triumphant return to France, *les mœurs Italiennes*—as it was customary to call the dissolute mode of life that prevailed—were then introduced ; the cardinal's aim being to corrupt the mind of the young king. Brought up in ignorance and effeminacy, and all knowledge of affairs of state withheld from him, Mazarin hoped to indispose him from taking upon himself the cares of government, and thus, by prolonging his own term of power, to rule him, as his father had been ruled by Richelieu. Once, indeed, there was an indication that the king was disposed to break bounds, when, in his seventeenth year, roused by the information that the parliament seemed inclined again to resist the edicts of his minister, he rode from Vincennes, equipped for the chase, and with his riding-whip in his hand, entered the hall where they were assembled. In an authoritative tone he said, " It is well known that your meetings have been the cause of great misfortunes to the

country ; I order you, therefore, to desist from discussing my edicts. Mr. President, I forbid you to allow these meetings, and I forbid every one of you to ask for them."

Those who were dissatisfied with the existing order of things—and many were extremely averse to it—were by no means displeased at this high-handed proceeding of the young monarch. It seemed to augur the speedy downfall of the cardinal. But nothing of the sort resulted from it. Louis was too fully occupied with *fêtes* and *carrousels*, the chase, and the cardinal's libertine suppers ; and the cardinal went on plundering the state with impunity, elevating his family, and enriching both them and himself. He gave also a fresh impetus to the already too prevalent habit of gambling. He was expert at games of hazard, and played for high stakes ; men often lost their estates to him, and women their jewels. The queen "played only a moderate game," and still preferred the theatre to the gambling-table.

The queen's love for the play had brought upon her many admonitions from the *curé* of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, and her conscience at last took alarm. His denunciations fell heaviest on the "*Comédies à machines, à l'Italienne.*" The bishops were convoked, and, after long deliberation, they declared that historical and serious plays might be witnessed without scruple. Several were even of opinion that the courtiers, whose duty it was to attend her at the theatre, might by that means be drawn from more objectionable pastimes elsewhere. It was not incompatible, then, with the queen's professed piety to sanction these public amusements. The devotions of kings, they said, must be regulated by rules more elastic

than the devotions of less exalted individuals, and circumstances determine what was or was not befitting or seemly in their case.

Again, then, the little theatre of the Palais Royal was graced by the presence of the queen—the king, the cardinal, and a train of ladies and gentlemen of the court accompanying her. Against the liveliness and mirth of the *petites pièces à l'Italienne*, was set, as a penitential counterbalance, the heavy-weighted dialogue of some production of the cardinal's playwrights. Not that he favored men of letters; he despised them; but he would often propitiate those whose pens he feared, and prevent them from writing a telling satire or clever pamphlet, by inducing the production of a bad play, and rewarding it with a pension, or the gift of some place, or office, that could be disposed of for an acceptable sum. And was not this better than cutting off their heads *à la Richelieu*? The *curé* of St. Germain, however, was not so easily propitiated. The presentation to a bishopric, or the gift of a rich abbacy, could not have reduced him to silence. He was bent on carrying his point, and boldly denounced the queen guilty of *péché mortel*—seven doctors of the Sorbonne supporting him.

Anne of Austria was sorely disquieted. She loved both her oratory and her theatre, her prayers and her plays. She did not neglect the former, and was unwilling to be deprived of the latter. The question of *péché mortel* was therefore formally submitted to the consideration of the doctors of the Sorbonne. Twelve of them opposed the seven who had agreed with the *curé*, and, with the usual result, convinced them, against their will, that they were in error. It

was not necessary, said the twelve, to adhere strictly, in the seventeenth century, to the customs of the apostolic age. In founding the first Christian churches a strict discipline was needed ; and, even now, to the unenlightened of the flock of the faithful, the world's pleasures must be sparingly conceded. But if her majesty, as a relaxation from the heavy cares of state, sought amusement at the theatre, so long as the play contained nothing scandalous, or contrary to good manners, it was an innocent pastime that without the slightest qualm of conscience might be indulged in. Thus, the sufferings of the queen's sensitive nature were healed ; and in a happy blending of piety and pleasure, her life again flowed on, undisturbed by the remonstrances of the pious *curé*, whom the courtiers derided for his efforts to deprive them of the play.

Yet there was one bitter thought that occasionally brought a pang to the breast of Anne of Austria—the thought that the power delegated to her favorite had irrevocably slipped out of her hands ; that he now ruled the nation absolutely and independently ; ruled the king, ruled her, and was not solicitous to conceal that fact from her. She was fond of homage ; but the cardinal had become less deferential than formerly, less assiduous in paying his court to her, and her disappointment and resentment often found expression in impotent opposition to his views. The queen passed more time in her oratory ; but piety was not yet the fashion—for the cardinal made a jest of religion—and, with the exception of a few ladies in immediate attendance upon her, gallantry and indevotion were the rule at court. “ *Mazarin, outre son avarice,* ” says Madame de Motte-

ville, "*méprisait les plus honnêtes femmes, les belles-lettres et tout ce qui peut contribuer à la politesse des hommes.*"

"*Les hommes et les femmes de la cour s'occupaient également de cabales et d'intrigues ; et pour l'ordinaire faisaient gloire de n'estimer que la vanité, l'ambition, l'intérêt et la volupté ; et le cardinal en était la cause.*"

In the midst of this corruption, more than one attempt was made to carry on the work of the extinct Hôtel de Rambouillet. Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who, from girlhood to middle age, had been accustomed to spend her evenings in the society of that learned and brilliant circle, felt keenly the loss of a distraction which from habit had become a necessity to her. The large sums received for "*Cyrus*" had been chiefly employed in paying her brother's debts. But Georges was now in Normandy, where he had married Mademoiselle de Martin-Vost, a young lady of good family and some property, who had fallen in love with his literary reputation—"Le *Cyrus*" having been attributed to him—and appears to have been equally pleased with his air of *grand seigneur*, as their marriage took place after a very short acquaintance. The brother and sister had always lived together, and Georges had persistently frowned away all Madeleine's suitors ; he could not, with his extravagant habits, afford to lose the aid of her prolific pen.

To her constant friend, Péliisson, he had a furious dislike. He and Madeleine often met in society, but Georges believed, or affected to believe, that these frequent meetings were assignations, and rigorously forbade them. A true and strong friendship had grown up between Péliisson and Madeleine—a friendship that continued throughout life. There was in it, doubtless, a large dash of sentiment ; it was one

of those friendships that approach very near to love, but happily contrive to avoid being wrecked on that dangerous shoal. Péliſſon exercised an extraordinary influence over women—women, too, of distinguished talent and elevated rank. But the fascination was in no degree owing to physical advantages. “*Disgracieux de taille et de visage,*” remarks Sévigné, “*mais en le dédoublant on trouvait une belle intelligence et une belle âme.*” There was, perhaps, not an uglier man in France; though Guillerague’s *mot* on Péliſſon, “that he abused the privilege that had been conceded to men of talent to be ugly,” was often borrowed and applied elsewhere.

Péliſſon, as a youth, is said to have been fairly good-looking; his disfigurement was the work of smallpox of the most malignant type. So greatly was he affected by the change in his personal appearance, that for some two or three years he secluded himself in the country, unable to overcome his extreme self-disgust. Yet, under an exterior so unprepossessing, so repellent to sympathy, he had the gift of both feeling and inspiring it. He was several years younger than Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who was disinclined to marriage, and had refused two or three advantageous offers. In one of her letters she says: “*Selon moi, le mariage est la chose du monde le plus difficile à faire bien à propos. Trois fois dans ma vie j’ai préféré la liberté à la richesse, et je ne saurois m’en repentir.*”

Péliſſon was confidential secretary to the famous Nicholas Fouquet (Marquis de Belle Isle and *surintendant des finances*) when Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who had devoted her talents and many years of her life to the support of her brother’s extravagances,

felt that the time had arrived to assert her right to be free. She had hired or purchased a house of modest pretensions in the Vieille Rue du Temple, where she could receive her numerous literary friends. It was then a pleasant, rural spot, her house standing in a garden full of fruit-bearing trees, surrounded by tall shrubs and bushes, where "the birds," she says, "built their nests, brought up their families undisturbed, and repaid her for their share of the fruit with their cheerful songs." In this unpretending dwelling she established the famous Samedi—a Rambouillet on a small scale. There was no *salon bleu*, with its velvet and gold, its mirrors and carvings, and the rich and varied adornments of that far-famed wealthy establishment. But every Saturday her *salle de reception* was filled with the most eminent of the *gens de lettres* of the old Rambouillet set. Personal merit and talent had been more considered than mere rank at the hôtel of the marquise, yet the most illustrious of the aristocracy frequented it. They also formed part of the circle of Mademoiselle de Scudéry, the Duke and Duchess de Montausier setting the example; the difference being that it was a coveted honor to be received at the hôtel in the Rue St. Thomas du Louvre, but a desire to *do* honor to a woman of high character and distinguished abilities that induced *les grands seigneurs et grandes dames* to frequent the *maisonnette* in the Vieille Rue du Temple.

The "Saturdays" of Mademoiselle de Scudéry were a great success. They soon became as famous as her romances, and the fashion she had set of "having a day," was very generally followed. The literary coteries of the "*précieuses*"—a term then beginning to be used, but which was taken in no ill

sense until some years later—were numerous ; none, however, attained celebrity equal to that of their foundress. The ladies of the lesser *noblesse* and of the *haute bourgeoisie*, who were *spirituelles* and possessed taste, leisure, and wealth, sought an introduction to these assemblies. But although they were purely literary, very few lady authors were admitted. Men of culture and of agreeable manners found a welcome there ; for Mademoiselle thought a party of women apt to grow dull. She had remarked that, she said, and also that on such occasions the unexpected entrance of one of the sterner sex would immediately brighten up the whole party.

On Tuesday she received her most cherished and intimate friends ; Ménage—who then lived in the old secularized cloister of St. Denis de la Chartre, and, following the fashion, had taken Wednesday for assembling his literary friends ; Chapelain—" *si bien renté*," yet so parsimonious, that Madeleine had to devise some delicate way of letting him know that his dress was startlingly shabby, and that when he presented himself he looked more like a mendicant than one of her circle of intimates. Then there was *la jeune* Madame Scarron, in whom she was interested, and, in a certain sense, protected ; also Madame de Sévigné, who was interested in *her*. De la Rochefoucauld often dropped in, and oftener on Tuesday than Saturday ; even Madame de Montbazon, with Madame de La Fayette, who had just essayed her pen in the portrait of Madame de Sévigné. Those sworn friends, Ninon and Saint Evremond, sometimes chaperoned Madame Scarron. Claude Perrault, the architect of the interior colonnade of the Louvre, was her constant visitor, and Paul Pélisson never was ab-

sent ; at the Saturday literary *réunions* he acted as secretary.

These and many other celebrities of the literary world and the *beau monde*, assembled, more or less numerous, on Tuesday from two to five. The hours of reception, when the *cercle* was learned and middle-aged, were spent in conversation, "*littéraire et galante*," as we are told ; when young and lively, in discussing the fashions, and being witty and merry at the expense of the court. If the weather was particularly fine, they took a turn in the garden, gathered and ate cherries, of which she had some of a remarkably fine kind, and, amongst her many accomplishments, numbered the useful art of making excellent preserves of them, as treats for her friends. Or they strolled in the extensive grounds of the old Temple, where the hôtel of the Grand Prieur Vendôme was then erected, or walked in the green lanes of the pleasant rural neighborhood. The famous Leibnitz did not disdain to address verses to Madeleine's par-quet, promising him immortality with the name of his mistress. She was fond of birds and all domestic animals, because, she said, they showed so much friendship for her. Life became a far more enjoyable possession to her after a kind Providence threw Georges in the way of Mademoiselle de Martin-Vost, and, so, took the gay gallant spendthrift off her hands.

She was exceedingly fond of society, and must have very skilfully husbanded her time, and turned every minute to account, or she could scarcely have accomplished so much writing. For she wrote her eight volumes of "*Clélie*" while Georges was in exile ; yet she was to be met with at most parties of

pleasure, often taking country rambles, and diligently returning the visits she received. The hours she devoted to writing were the early ones of the morning, and the later ones of the evening, and she wrote easily and rapidly. "Clélie," though it was well received and went through several editions, was considered inferior to "Cyrus." It has in it more of the affectation that was beginning to be ascribed to the "*Précieuses*." The subject is taken from Roman history, so far as well-known names are concerned ; but the facts of history are not in it, or, indeed, intended to be. It is the history of her own immediate circle, and the civil war of the Fronde ; the incongruity between the names of the heroes and the actions attributed to them being often very striking. This was less apparent in "Cyrus," because little or nothing was known of the manners and customs of ancient Persia, and the action of the story was more heroic. But both "Cyrus" and "Clélie" are works that do honor to the French language. Calprenède was extremely jealous of the success of "Clélie," and revenged himself by endeavoring to depreciate Mademoiselle's *réunions* ; but he prevented neither its *succès d'estime* nor *succès d'argent*.

The description of Carthage is fine, and has been pronounced to be not an unfaithful one. Many lively pictures are also given of the combats outside Paris (otherwise Rome) and the *émeutes* within. "Clélie" contains seventy-three portraits of persons of celebrity, so cleverly characteristic that they were immediately recognized by their contemporaries. Ladies of distinction desired to see themselves depicted in Mademoiselle de Scudéry's romances ; not that she unduly flattered them, like Madame de La Fayette in

her portrait of Madame de Sévigné, who was thus addressed : " Heaven has bestowed graces upon you, madame, which never have been given but to you, and the world is indebted to you for coming into it to show it a thousand agreeable qualities before wholly unknown to it." " The pen of Sappho," writes a French author, " competed with the pencil of Philippe de Champaigne, as well as with that of Mignard and of Petitot, so faithfully did she portray both person and character." Tallemant names several of the originals, and the descriptions of Scarron and his house, and of Madame de Maintenon in her youth, have been pronounced more correct than any other extant.

These sketches of the *élite* of society brought pen-and-ink portraits into fashion, and for some time this literary caprice formed the favorite amusement of the *cercle* of the Grande Mademoiselle, while she and her *maréchaux* lived retired and in disgrace, at the Château de Six Tours (St. Fargeau). Those courageous *Frondeuses* who had not been included in the cold reconciliation that some of the turbulent nobles effected with the court, amused themselves with sketching their own portraits ; and they did not shrink from depicting, what they considered, the principal beauties of their persons, but with a free, bold hand, set down both their physical and mental qualities. These " Divers Portraits" Mademoiselle printed, and submitted to the public ; her own portrait, sketched by herself, being of the number, also those of Louis XIV., the Grand Condé, and Christina of Sweden.

Mademoiselle de Scudéry's portraits of her contemporaries, her " Conversations morales " and

“Entretiens sur toutes espèces de sujets,” are still full of interest. She excelled in conversation, that art so sedulously cultivated at Rambouillet, and in society generally in the middle of the seventeenth century ; an art which it was the aim of the literary coteries of “*Les Précieuses*” also to sustain. And though in their desire still further to perfect the language, they fell into many affectations of speech, yet their influence on society was beneficial, and, in spite of their prudery, their *réunions* promoted social intercourse, and were schools of good manners in a time of general depravity. The “Conversations” were written when “*précieuse*” had become a term of ridicule—not so much owing to Molière’s comedy, as to “*La Précieuse, ou les mystères des ruelles*,” of the Abbé de Pure, which preceded it. It was a work more malicious than witty ; the abbé, for some offence against their rules, having been excluded from the coteries of the *précieuses*. But in the “Conversations” there is no straining after effect, no false refinement, or example of the bad taste attributed to the “*précieuses ridicules*” with whom Mademoiselle de Scudéry has been erroneously classed. On the contrary, they are *chefs-d’œuvre* of their kind ; and together with her portraits and letters, possess both literary and historic value—as they afford a pleasing idea of the sort of conversation that formed the charm of the distinguished circle of Rambouillet, and generally of that polished society of the seventeenth century of which Mademoiselle de Scudéry is the acknowledged representative.

It was considered a reproach to the government, that one held in such high esteem by her friends, and also by the public, for the perfect propriety of

her conduct, the rectitude of her principles, and the brilliancy of her talents, should have no pension conferred on her ; while a few madrigals, or sonnets, from the pen of some mediocre versifier often undeservedly received the recognition due to literary merit. Scarron wrote—after he had with difficulty obtained a small pension for himself from the queen, as her “ Malade : ”

“ Siècle méconnoissant, le dirai-je à ta honte,
On admire Sapho, tout le monde en fait compte.
Mais, O siècle, à l'estime et aux admirations,
Pourquoi n'ajouter pas de bonnes pensions ? ”

That Fouquet, who so liberally patronized talent, should have omitted to pension Mademoiselle de Scudéry, is surprising. Ménage reproached Colbert for similar neglect. Yet Mazarin, who was said to despise both *les femmes honnêtes et les belles lettres*, left her, by will, an annuity of one thousand livres. His nephew and heir, le Duc de Mazarin, declined to pay it. Her friends interfered, and the tribunal appealed to confirmed her right to it, and ordered the duke to pay up the arrears, and the interest due upon them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A Royal Visitor.—Christina of Sweden.—Chasing the wild Boar.—“Vivat nostra Regina!”—Christina's Abdication.—Christina described in “Cyrus.”—A Surprise for the Court.—Christina in Paris.—A Sensation at Compiègne.—Costume of the Queen of Sweden.—At the first Glance, Alarming.—Her personal Appearance.—Finances at a low Ebb.—Departure and Return.—Assassination of Monaldeschi.

A RUMOR reached France in 1656 that the court might shortly expect the honor of a visit from the learned and philosophic queen, Christina of Sweden. She had resigned her crown, abjured the reformed Lutheran faith, and having seen Rome and the head of her new religion, Pope Alexander VII., was anxious to extend her travels to France, and to visit its capital and its king, before finally settling down in the Holy City.

Expectation was naturally on tip-toe, for no woman of the seventeenth century enjoyed a greater reputation for learning and masculine ability than Christina; and none, probably, in any age, has exemplified more strikingly the folly of attempting to run counter to nature, and to put woman on a level with man. In her training and education, from the early age of four years, an elaborate system was pursued, devised by her father, Gustavus Adolphus, and his minister Oxenstierna. Gustavus was about to join the princes of Northern Germany against the Emperor Ferdinand, in order to aid them in that terrible struggle for religious freedom, now known as

the Thirty Years' War. He had no male heir, Christina was his only child ; and, should Gustavus fall on the battle-field, as he seemed to anticipate, and the sceptre pass into the hands of a woman, he desired that that woman should be worthy to reign over the gallant and hardy Swedes, and be capable of governing her kingdom with masculine firmness and wisdom, and of carrying out plans and reforms he had greatly at heart.

Two years later, Gustavus was killed at the battle of Lutzen. Soon after, her mother, Elenora of Brandenburg, permanently took up her residence in Denmark, leaving Christina to the care of her aunt, the Princess Katarina, who died while the queen was yet a mere child. Henceforth, her bringing up was that of a boy—no female occupations, no female instructors. She wore a boy's jacket, furred hat, neck-tie, and boots ; the petticoat of woman was the only concession permitted to the weakness and vanity of the sex. She could shoot either with bow or pistol, with perfect precision and steadiness, and was a skilful and daring horsewoman. To follow the wild boar, the Arctic fox, the bear, and other wild animals, she would plunge recklessly into the dense Swedish forests, often riding for ten successive hours without any apparent fatigue; sometimes—after passing three or four hours of the night in a forester's hut in the woods—remounting at daybreak, quite fresh and lively, to reach Upsala early, for her studies or the affairs of the council chamber. She had all the hardihood and endurance of the Swede, but was not, like Gustavus, robust in appearance.

The rough sports and recreations in which she so frequently indulged would seem to be quite incom-

patible with the severe course of study she was supposed to have simultaneously, and with equal diligence, pursued. At the age of eighteen, when the reins of government were given into her hands, we are told that she had not only studied the Bible and its Jewish commentators in the original Hebrew, but had read all the ancient Greek and Latin authors, and was able to converse with fluency in both languages. Besides this, she was familiar with every modern tongue, and had examined into every system of philosophy. The Swedes, who, as a nation, had more of the qualities that make brave and hardy soldiers and sailors than philosophers and *littérateurs*, stood amazed at the tales that were told them of the vast learning of their queen. But they appreciated far more her bold riding and driving, her shooting and hunting, and thought her semi-masculine dress very becoming. When she was seen in her sledge, or, with pistols at her saddle-bow, dashing along the streets of Upsala or Lund, the riotous students would call out lustily, "*Vivat nostra regina Christina*," and drink her health, in foaming tankards of beer, in the market-place. She, however, despised the Swedes, and longed for a wider and more cultured sphere for the display of her great abilities, than the little kingdom she was called to the irksome duty of reigning over.

She declined to be troubled with cares so insignificant, but, *en attendant* an opportune moment for emancipating herself, she condescended to squander the finances of the state, to give away the crown lands to her favorites, and to the needy professors and poets she induced to visit Stockholm. Descartes died there. A gold chain, and the promise of a pen-

sion, prevailed on him in his old age and poverty to undertake the journey to Sweden, and to encounter the rigors of the northern winter. But he had left France for many a year. Its climate he fancied unsuited to the philosophic brain ; it was too exciting, inducing a kind of whirl, productive of idle fancies, and flighty notions fatal to sober thought. He therefore left Paris, fled to Holland, where also he could propound his theories with greater freedom. Christina held long arguments with him, and, as she believed, confuted many of his notions.

In 1654 she abdicated in favor of her cousin Charles, left Sweden immediately, and soon after embraced Catholicism. The Swedes, for the sake of the great Gustavus Adolphus, whose memory they held in high veneration, had been disposed to look leniently on her follies, but her abjuration of his and their religion closed their hearts against her. They never forgave her, and when, some years after, she would have resumed the crown, they resolutely rejected her.

But the French court was anxiously looking forward to her arrival. She was supposed to know more than the learned members of the French Academy and the doctors of the Sorbonne united. Her ambassador, De la Gardie—on whose useless embassy she had wasted an immense sum of money, in spite of the remonstrances of Oxenstierna and his colleagues—had a few years before greatly exalted his royal mistress's perfections, for the sake of increasing his own importance and magnifying his office. As fame and her ambassador described her, she is portrayed in "*Le Grand Cyrus*" under the name of

the Princess Cleobuline. And before her visit to Paris, Georges de Scudéry wrote :

“ Christine peut donner des lois
Aux cœurs des vainqueurs les plus braves,
Mais la terre a-t-elle des rois
Qui soient dignes d'être ses esclaves ? ”

The Duc de Guise was appointed by Mazarin to meet this renowned queen at the frontier, and to conduct her to Paris with all due state and ceremony. A great surprise awaited him. She had no retinue, scarcely any baggage, and her dress was so unlike anything he had seen before, that he could scarce forbear an exclamation of astonishment. Two women and two ill-favored men accompanied her. We are not told whether they represented ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting, or were merely domestic servants, only that they were so shabbily dressed that the men looked like mendicants, the females like old-clothes women. All pens had been employed in celebrating Christina. The ladies had been told that abstruse sciences and profound philosophy were familiar to her as the distaff and the needle were to the generality of her sex. But “renown,” remarks Madame de Motteville, “is a great gossip, and one by no means unwilling to overstep the bounds of truth.”

It was with some satisfaction, then, that the ladies discovered that this “*rinne gothique*” was a woman whose talents and virtues were but of a very ordinary kind, and that, whatever else she might know, she was utterly ignorant of the art of dressing herself either tastefully or becomingly, and had but little regard even for cleanliness. They were also greatly

shocked at the evident amusement she derived from the ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church ; for she had not professed herself a member of it from any conviction that she was turning from error to embrace religious truth ; but, being about to travel and reside among Catholics, she thought to command more respect and homage by professing the same faith. The conversion, as it was termed, of this learned and royal heretic, was greatly vaunted in the Catholic world, and was expected to bring into the true fold a large number of benighted stragglers then wandering in the wilderness of error. But for Christianity, under whatever form it assumed, she had little respect, and, as was said at the time, "*Si elle pratiquait les morales, c'était plutôt par fantaisie que par sentiment.*"

Both the court and the *bourgeoisie* gave her a brilliant reception ; but she affected great indifference to everything prepared for her amusement, and found little to admire in what she saw in Paris. She gave the preference to Rome, but said the country was fine and appeared to be well populated. She pronounced the Italian "*comédie à machines*" bad ; criticized very freely, and with the air of a *connoisseur*, the collections of pictures that were shown to her. But she liked the banquets, ate with amazing appetite, and talked much and loudly ; her voice having the tone of a man's, and her gestures and movements the air of a bold trooper. Yet while she was a novelty she pleased, for she was vivacious, if rather boisterous, well informed, and fond of displaying her knowledge. She spoke French very well, and understood Latin, but these two languages, together with her mother tongue and the Italian she had

learnt in Rome, were the extent of her linguistic accomplishments.

The queen and the young king and his brother were at Compiègne. It was made a point of etiquette that Christina—travelling without any of the showy trappings and encumbrances that royalty then was so fond of, though not *incognita*—should go thither and visit them, after the cardinal had done the honors in Paris. Accordingly, after having made a short sojourn in the capital, and gone the round of the *salons*—receiving and affording the most amusement *chez* Ninon and Scarron, and being both pleased and edified at Mademoiselle de Scudéry's—she set out alone for Compiègne. Great was the sensation she caused there, and probably intended to cause; for the more she affected the Amazon and disregarded conventionalities, the more she imagined she proclaimed her superiority over the elegant and frivolous "femininities" who did not aspire to be more than women, and proved herself a worthy daughter of the great Gustavus Adolphus.

Her appearance so strongly resembled that of a wandering gipsy—for during her travels in the sunny south she had taken no care to preserve her complexion, and her skin had become much tanned—that the delicately-strung nerves of Anne of Austria received quite a shock when the outlandish-looking object, ushered into her presence with such extraordinary ceremony, was announced as the Queen of Sweden. Instead of her own fair hair, plaited and hanging loosely on her shoulders—as when White-locke, Cromwell's ambassador, saw her—Christina had promoted herself to the dignity of a wig, and the wig was of black hair, and in fashion such as the

men of that period were accustomed to adorn themselves with. It was high, and full frizzed in front, large and bushy at the sides, whence it fell low in narrow points. Apparently, it had been well powdered and pomaded before she left Paris ; but she had had breezy weather on her journey, and the wind had taken great liberties with her wig, tossing its curls hither and thither, and tumbling them together in wild dishevelment. The back of this strange *coiffure*, so manly in front, had a frizzy arrangement, in imitation of the manner in which women then wore their hair.

Her bodice, or corset, was cut to resemble a man's jacket, her under garment was drawn out between the bodice and the petticoat, as the men then wore their shirts, and there was the same kind of puffing out of linen at the end of the sleeves. The broad linen collar was merely fastened with a pin, and was put on all awry. A piece of black riband was tied round her neck. The ladies then wore long flowing trains, but Christina's short gray skirt, with narrow bands of silver and gold braiding, just cleared her ankles and displayed her boots, which in form and material were the same as men's. As the head of a military nation, she thought herself entitled to wear a soldier's hat ; and to trail a sword at her side.

Madame de Motteville confesses that, at the first glance, Christina was alarming ; but on the eye becoming reconciled to her fantastic costume, neither it nor the wearer was displeasing. She could be very agreeable when she desired to make a favorable impression ; readily penetrated into the character and feelings of those about her, and *pro tem.* adapted her conversation and manners to them. In France, her

fluency in the language served to reconcile many to her eccentricities. The king and his brother were first presented to her as private gentlemen, but she had seen their portraits in Paris, and remarked to Mazarin that "those young gentlemen had the air of princes born to a throne." Louis was then eighteen, but he shrank from conversing with her; his ignorance was so profound, and her reputation for learning so overwhelming.

In personal appearance Christina is described as below the middle height, full chested, but not perfect in figure, one shoulder being higher than the other, a defect she contrived partly to conceal by the oddity of her dress. Her hands were considered well formed, but were generally too dirty to be attractive; they were large also, and, unlike the "*mains mignonnes*" of Anne of Austria, had been roughly used in manly sports and exercises. Her face was large, but its contour good; her nose aquiline; her mouth not unpleasing, but not small enough for beauty, and her teeth tolerably even. She had very fine eyes; bright, full of expression and vivacity, and searching in their glances. Though much sunburnt, and bearing traces of the smallpox, her complexion was not bad; so that, on the whole, though not handsome, she was probably rather good-looking, and at the time referred to she was in her thirtieth year.

But the court soon grew weary of her, and she found its etiquette oppressive. She laughed at the *menuet* and other stately dances, and at the *fadeur* of the conversation of the queen and her ladies. She was soon acquainted with all the scandal of Paris, commented on it freely, and was not sparing of oaths

and jests that were shocking to ears polite. She, however, seemed greatly inclined to give Paris the preference to her much-vaunted Rome for her abode. But, alas ! funds were wanting ; and one object of her visit seems to have been to claim a sum of money which at the Peace of Westphalia it was stipulated that France was to pay to Sweden. A promise only of payment was given ; for it was desired that Christina should leave Paris, and to facilitate her plans, Mazarin's palace at Rome was ordered to be prepared for her reception.

Christina at length felt compelled to take her departure, and a sum of 200,000 livres was then paid to her by the cardinal.

In the following year she announced another visit to France, and Fontainebleau was assigned to her ; but she was not invited to return to Paris. While at Fontainebleau there occurred that mysterious event, the assassination, by her order, of Monaldeschi. The nature of his treachery and the kind of confidence she reposed in him have never been fully ascertained. She was fond of meddling in the political affairs of Europe, and once or twice offered her mediation to obtain a settlement of state differences, but it was never accepted.

Gui Patin, the author of some satires and gossiping memoirs little to be relied upon, asserted that Christina had discovered that Monaldeschi served Mazarin as a spy on her actions, and had betrayed her political secrets to him. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, with whom, though in disgrace, Christina was more intimate than with most ladies of the court, has said, that of the two Italians the queen had with her, Sentanelli and Monaldeschi, the former appeared to

stand higher than the latter in her favor and confidence ; but that Monaldeschi, whom he had supplanted, being exceedingly annoyed and jealous, to revenge himself set reports afloat injurious to her honor, and that Christina, in high indignation, ordered his assassination. Madame de Motteville confirms this view of the mysterious and tragical occurrence.

Whatever the motive, the deed has been a blot on the character and fame of the Swedish queen. No one was found to justify her but Leibnitz. She was, in fact, amenable to the laws of France for murder ; but the law closed its ears to the report, though, at the same time, Christina was made to understand that she could not again be received at the court of France, and that therefore she must at once leave the kingdom. She returned directly to Rome.* Pope Alexander VII. allowed her a pension of 12,000 scudi ; and as she managed her pecuniary affairs so ill, he deputed Cardinal Azzolini to regulate them for her. She resided in Rome twenty-five years, and employed herself in writing several works, and in collecting *objets d'art*.

Her visit to the French court was long remembered, and her eccentric sayings and doings were often the theme of lively conversation there. Christina liberally patronized literature, science, and art. To Mademoiselle de Scudéry she often wrote, and sent her valuable presents.

* The insolent letter said to have been written by her on this occasion to " Jules Mazarin," is now known to be a forgery.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Madame de Caylus.—Reminiscences of the Fronde.—Hôtels d'Albret and de Richelieu.—Ruelles and Alcoves.—La Marquise de Sablé.—A Disciple of D'Urfé.—A faithless Knight.—Dismissed by his Lady-love.—The Port Royal Salon.—“Maximes et Pensées.—La Rochefoucauld's Philosophy.—Les “Lettres Provinciales.”—Blaise Pascal.—Maximes de Madame de Sablé.

MADAME DE CAYLUS, the niece of Madame de Maintenon, attributes, in her “Souvenirs,” the supposed aversion of Louis XIV. to her aunt, in the early days of his acquaintance with her, to a suspicion that she was a “*précieuse*” of the Rambouillet school. She was a frequenter—at that time as a humble friend—of the Hôtels d'Albret and de Richelieu. But, though imitating Rambouillet, they had neither the same influence in society, nor included in their circle (the guests of one being, with few exceptions, the guests of the other) the wit, learning, and distinction which made the *salon* of the Marquise de Rambouillet celebrated above all others.

It is very probable that the term “*préciosité*,” or, indeed, any other signifying a respect for morals or decency of conduct, would be offensive to a man so thoroughly dissolute as Louis XIV. But it is yet more probable, that to revive the memories of the Fronde was to him a greater offence. The name of Scarron reminded him that he had been obliged to fly from Paris, and had re-entered it only when it pleased the people to invite him ; that his throne had

been so thoroughly shaken, that he had very nearly been shaken from it, during that memorable struggle—which, to please him, the servile band of worshipping courtiers, when the threatened danger was past, ridiculed and made a jest of.

The widow of the witty pamphleteer and satirist—whether or not a professed “*précieuse*” in her principles—was then too insignificant a person for “Glorious Apollo” to bestow any thought upon. But her frequent and importunate solicitations for a pension annoyed him excessively. He tore up her petitions and tossed them from him, exclaiming, “Shall I never hear the last of this widow Scarron?” And, persistent as she was, she would not have succeeded in her object (for her friends of the *hôtels* did not aid her), had not the reigning favorite of the royal harem done her the friendly turn to take up her cause and plead it for her. So long as she bore the name of Scarron, Louis was not reconciled to her—good nurse though she proved to his illegitimate children; but when she became Madame de Maintenon, then her arts began readily to take effect on him.

Madame de Montespan was a constant visitor at the *Hôtels d’Albret* and de Richelieu, but found it no barrier to her elevation as *maîtresse en titre*. It was there her acquaintance with Madame Scarron was formed. Those *hôtels* were presided over by ladies of less distinguished literary and artistic tastes than the Marquise de Rambouillet, whom they imitated, chiefly, in cultivating sociability. Just as the ladies of the *haute bourgeoisie*, and even those of far inferior pretensions, followed the fashion introduced by Mademoiselle de Scudéry, and set apart some hours of an

appointed day in each week for receiving their friends ; thus promoting that taste for social intercourse, inherent in the French of all classes. If all had not *salons*, all could receive in their *ruelles*—the space between the bed and the wall—and it was a custom of very old date to do so. Henry IV., whom, unless the gout held him fast by the leg—which it sometimes did—one would hardly suspect of so indolent a proceeding, transacted business of state, with Sully and others, in the right-hand *ruelle*, and received the visits of his intimate friends in the left.

Generally, there was but one *ruelle*, for turning from side to side must have been fatiguing. The indolent Anne of Austria, who passed so much of her life in bed, held very merry, chatty parties in her *ruelle* ; and all ladies did the same. Alcoves, as before observed, were introduced from Spain by the dignified Marquise de Rambouillet, and not merely for closing up a bed, but as being better suited than the *ruelle* for cosy conversation. If an obscure *précieuse* received in a *ruelle* the homage of her *adorateurs platoniques*, *les grandes dames* also received in their *ruelles* friends of the sterner sex. But the purely literary coteries of the *précieuses* had for object, besides the pleasure of a social *réunion*, discussion on the improvement of the language. We know, that, in their zeal for excessive refinement in language and manners, they often overstepped the limits of good taste, and, in their endeavor to accomplish some desirable changes, introduced not a few affectations. Yet, if there were "*précieuses ridicules*," there were also "*précieuses illustres*."

The true successor of Madame de Rambouillet was the Marquise de Sablé, who, above all others, was

distinguished in society for what were then understood as "*grande politesse*," and "*parfaite distinction*." She was a highly finished specimen of *une grande dame* of the Rambouillet school. No longer young, but extremely well-preserved, and always elegantly and tastefully dressed, she was still much admired in the maturity of her beauty. Her smooth skin had no trace of small-pox, a disease she had lived much in dread of, and had happily escaped, by constantly and carefully guarding against the chances of taking it. Her fear of death, under any form, is said to have been extreme, in her youth ; frequently causing deep depression of spirit. But as the time for leaving the world drew nearer, her love for it declined ; she became gradually reconciled to bidding an eternal adieu to its pains and its pleasures, its cares and its vanities, and, at last, with the poet François Mainard, was able to say :

" Las d'espérer, et de me plaindre
Des muses, des grands, e! du sort,
C'est ici que j'attends la mort,
Sans la désirer ni la craindre."

Her disposition was a happy combination of many agreeable qualities ; she possessed much goodness of heart, with liveliness and wit, tempered by piety. She was of noble birth, being the daughter of Gilles de Sauvré, Marquis de Courtenvaux. Left a widow at an early age, she determined to contract no second marriage ; for, being a diligent student of "*Astrée*," she was deeply imbued with those ideal and chivalric notions of love which prevailed at Rambouillet, and had greatly contributed to diffuse the taste for that high-flown sentimentality. Love, according to her

idea, which was, indeed, but the idea of D'Urfé and the Spanish romancists—from whom Corneille borrowed the subjects of his plays, and imbibed similar views of *la grande passion*—must be both pure and passionate; the lover must worship his mistress; must pay her the most respectful homage, and his happiness must be that she will deign to receive it.

In her youth Madame de Sablé had laid it down as an axiom, that “woman was created to be the ornament of the world, and to receive the adoration of man.” Later on in life, she did not insist that it actually was so, in the degenerate age in which her lot was cast, but, that such was originally the Creator's beneficent intention. Since then, man had become disloyal, not only to woman, but to himself, and the high destiny which had at first been assigned to all mankind had become the happy lot but of few.

When she was Mdlle. de Sauvré, her *beau idéal* of a perfect cavalier was the Maréchal Duc de Montmorenci—one of the handsomest men of his day, and brave to temerity—who was beheaded at Toulouse in 1636, having joined the timid and irresolute Gaston d'Orleans in a plot against Richelieu. But Mdlle. de Sauvré had then ceased to receive his homage. He had been her “*galant et honnête homme*,” according to the honorable and respectful manner then in vogue, and she had rewarded him with smiles and blushes, indicating (so it was thought) almost too tender a feeling on her part. Montmorenci, faithless knight, had, however, presumed to raise his eyes to Anne of Austria, and to heave a deep sigh as he again cast them languidly to earth. The queen—“*pieuse et galante*”—like Mdlle. de Sauvré, also deigned to reward the handsome cavalier with a smile

and a blush. The lady to whom he had sworn fealty, being informed of his infidelity, summoned him to her presence ; not to reproach him, but to dismiss him for ever, with the stigma of disloyalty on his conscience. Admiration, if shared with the greatest princess in the world, could be but displeasing to her. These platonic sentimentalities were the fashion, and no one more piqued himself upon them than *triste* Louis XIII.

But the widowed Marquise de Sablé, arrived at that uncertain, yet unpleasantly advanced, period of life called middle age, was a far less romantic person. She was now more occupied with the care of her health, the salvation of her soul, and the amusement of her mind with polite literature, as well as the enlivening of the quiet routine of her life, by assembling around her the aristocratic and refined society she had so long been accustomed to. She had built herself a residence within the precincts of Port Royal de Paris, but quite distinct from the monastery. There she received a distinguished circle of the *noblesse* and the *litterati*, after the manner of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, with whose traditions she was perfectly acquainted. It was the re-establishment of the *salon bleu* in miniature, subdued, too, by the shadow of a shade of soft religious light. There was less space, but the same exquisite taste in arrangement ; the same refinement and good breeding in the company. The conversation was sparkling and witty, the prevailing tone decidedly gallant. For although the model hostess was devout, even to the extent of occasionally secluding herself from the world for a day or two, yet her devotion, like herself

and her surroundings, had an elegance in it, unmarred by the slightest tinge of severity.

The Marquise de Sablé no longer visited the court. Her Jansenism would, probably, have caused her to be less well received there than formerly ; yet she kept on excellent terms with her friends of all shades of theological and political opinion. Religion and politics were tabooed subjects in her *salon* ; but she was fond of recording, in the form of a *maxime*, or *pensée*, the result of her reflections on her varied experiences of the chequered scenes of life. In this way originated the "Maximes et Pensées" of La Rochefoucauld, who was one of her most intimate friends. It was she who suggested that species of literature, and gave the first impulse to it ; and while portraits were the rage with the Luxembourg circle, maxims were in high vogue in the Port Royal *salon*, whence they spread to that of Madame La Fayette and of La Rochefoucauld.

The *maximes* and *pensées* were handed about, turned, and re-turned ; a trait of wit added, or a drop of acid poured in. All who frequented the Port Royal *salon* were expected to make, or to assist in making, them. La Rochefoucauld, writing to Madame de Sablé, says : "*Voilà tout ce que j'ai de maximes. Mais comme on ne fait rien pour rien, je vous demande un potage aux carottes, un ragoût de mouton,*" etc. Excellent in everything, the *cuisine* of her establishment was noted for its *recherche*, and she liked, *en tête-à-tête*, or *parti carré*, that her friends should partake with her of her *petits plats exquis*.

At another time, La Rochefoucauld would lay several sentences before the assembled circle, who criticized and discussed them, and made observations

on their construction, by which he often profited, and greatly improved them. The bitter or acid tone which marks them, is, however, supposed to be rarely due to any one but himself. Thus were the greater part of those *tristes* and cynical "Maximes et Pensees" composed. Huet says, that many of them are due to Madame de La Fayette, who lived on terms of very close intimacy with the surly egotist, and devoted herself entirely to him in his latter years. She writes, with reference to this friendship: "*Il m'a donné de l'esprit, et j'ai réformé son cœur.*" But of *esprit* she had abundance of her own, and he had no heart to reform.

The "Maximes" have been generally considered false and commonplace, in theory; and to a great extent, no doubt, they are, or the world would be a more heartless and dreary one than it actually is. Rochefoucauld depicted himself in them, and as he was a keen observer, he saw, probably, in the course of his life that there were very many in the world not unlike him. They owe much of their reputation to his style, which is sententious and vigorous. Their piquancy lies less in the maxims, or thoughts themselves, than in the manner in which their malice is developed. Indeed, as a writer, La Rochefoucauld takes a very high place; as a philosopher, few allow him any merit, or even the claim to be ranked as one.

The author of the famous "Lettres Provinciales" was another celebrity of the Jansenist *salon* of the Marquise de Sablé. He, too, was fain to contribute his quota of maxims to the general budget. Influenced, probably, by the gentle and genial disposition of the lady, his mood was less severe, when his pen was employed to gratify her, than when it traced

those *pensées* that were intended as the preparation for a work, in which he proposed to prove the truth of the Christian religion. Pascal wrote for Madame de Sablé :

"Toutes les sottises et les injustices que je ne fais pas m'emeuvent la bile.

"Un peu de bon temps, un bon-mot, une louange, une caresse, me tirent d'une profonde tristesse donc je n'ai pu me tirer par aucun effort de méditation. Quelle machine que mon âme ! Quel abîme de misère et de faiblesse !"

Pascal was the most eloquent of the prose writers of the middle of the seventeenth century. His "Lettres Provinciales," addressed to the Jesuits in defence of the Jansenists—when the disputes respecting the five heretical propositions of Jansenius were agitating Rome, and the religious world of France—are in force of style, and purity of language, models of fine writing and eloquent irony. The consciousness of powerful genius occasionally appears in the slightly arbitrary tone of some of the *pensées*. In the work which was to be based on them—but which his premature death in his thirty-ninth year prevented him from entering upon—he proposed to show that the Christian religion is not contrary to reason ; that it is venerable—both inspiring and conferring respect ; that it is so gentle and amiable one would wish it to be true ; that it is holy, from its grandeur and elevation, and that, as it promises mankind the truest good and happiness, it is worthy of the highest veneration and love. Pascal's genius developed itself early, and early he was taken away. His career is interesting ; but, as it is generally known, need not be enlarged upon here.

Madame de Sablé did not put her own "Maximes

et Pensées'' into print. If she produced any that were *piquantes* or worthy of being preserved, they were probably included amongst those of La Rochefoucauld. A few exist in private papers and letters of the time. Victor Cousin, in his "Femmes illustres," gives the following as Madame de Sablé's :

"Il y a un certain empire dans la manière de parler et dans les actions, qui se fait faire place partout, et qui gagne par avance la considération et le respect."

"Le comment faire la meilleure partie des choses, et l'air qu'on leur donne, dore, accommode, et adoucit les plus facheuses."

"Être trop mécontent de soi est une faiblesse ; être trop content de soi, une sottise."

They are neither very witty nor profound, but they are characteristic of their author.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The King's Illness.—The Quack and the Court Physicians.—Mazarin flatters Cromwell.—Début of Molière in "L'Étourdi."—La Troupe de Monsieur.—Les Précieuses et les Pecques.—Life of a Provincial Actor.—Molière's Prose Plays.—"Les Jansénistes d'Amour."

THE king was twenty years of age, and still the government remained entirely in the hands of Mazarin. He now ruled France despotically, though, once again he had prepared for flight, as well as for carrying with him the enormous wealth he had fraudulently amassed. It was when the king fell ill in Calais, whither the cardinal had taken him while the English and French troops, commanded by Turenne, were fighting the Spaniards in Flanders. For some days the death of Louis was fully expected, and all eyes were turned towards Philippe, Monsieur. The courtiers flattered the young prince, and the spirit of the Fronde revived in cabals against "le Mazarin." In the last extremity, a provincial quack, in repute for the cures he had effected, was sent for from Abbeville to see the royal patient. Having examined him, he confidently announced that "*le beau garçon, quoique bien malade n'en mourroit pas,*" and, forthwith, proceeded to administer remedies that horrified the court physicians, but put the king out of danger, and soon restored him to health. The courtiers no longer bestowed their attentions on Philippe, and a few

sentences of banishment broke up the Parisian cabal against the cardinal.

He now thought it high time to marry the king, and applied for the hand of Maria Theresa of Spain. It did not then suit the views of Philip IV. to give his daughter to Louis XIV., who, on his part, after several *amours passagers*, seemed to have become seriously attached to little, fat, ugly Maria Mancini. She had been asked in marriage by Prince Charles Stuart (Charles II.). But his fortunes were then at a very low ebb, and his proposal was of course rejected. Mazarin was, at that time, complimenting and courting "*le plus grand homme du monde*," as he termed Cromwell, with whom France was then in alliance, and to whom Dunquerque—the stipulated price for the aid of his troops in expelling the Spaniards from Flanders—had just been delivered over; the cardinal having vainly tried to evade fulfilling the arrangement. He is said to have desired to marry his niece to Richard Cromwell; but when, after Cromwell's death, the tide unexpectedly turned, Mazarin became willing that Maria should be Queen of England. Charles, however, then declined to entertain the overtures made to him. It seems doubtful whether Louis really had so much love for Maria Mancini as to wish to make her his wife; but, at all events, their parting, though one of weeping and sighing to her, was not, apparently, very grievous to him.

If he did feel a slight passing pang, he found balm in abundance to soothe it, in the shape of gross flattery that he loved so well, and which was so eagerly administered to him by his courtiers. And it was more soothing still when it fell from the lips of the

admiring, if frivolous, circle of ladies who composed the court of Anne of Austria, and of whose conversation and society he was exceedingly fond. Mazarin, too, who sought to hold him in leading-strings as long as it was possible, contrived to keep up a perpetual round of pleasures for his amusement, and an endless succession of *fêtes* and *ballets*, operas, plays, etc.

Louis read with exceeding delight the romances of Mademoiselle de Scudéry—the “*grande galanterie*” of her heroes being especially pleasing to him—and also made himself acquainted with the tragedies of Corneille. These he read with the Connetable Colonne, a man of culture and *esprit*, who afterwards married Maria Mancini. Corneille, at this time, had essayed a lighter pen, in comedy, and “*Le Menteur*” had appeared when Molière made his *début* in Paris, as an actor and a dramatist, in his first play of “*L’Étourdi*.” He played before the king and the court, and at once established himself in the favor of Louis. His *troupe* was named the “*Troupe de Monsieur*,” and performed at the Petit Bourbon.

Jean Baptiste Poquelin, throwing up the study of the law, began at the age of twenty-five the career of an actor. At first he played only as an amateur; then, adopting the stage as a profession, took the name of Molière, and joined the company of strollers calling themselves “*L’illustre Théâtre*,” his aim being to perfect himself in the provinces. After an absence of twelve years he returned to Paris, a finished comedian, and with the reputation—founded on the success of “*L’Étourdi*” at Lyon—of a most promising dramatist. “*Le dépit Amoureux*,” which followed “*L’Étourdi*,” confirmed the favorable im-

pression already made, and the "Troupe de Monsieur" threw quite into the shade the other company of players, then performing in Paris, at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. From his long sojourn in the provinces, and the nature of his profession—which necessitated frequent appeals for protection and patronage to the *petite noblesse*, and rich *bourgeoisie*, of the various towns he and his companions temporarily abode in—Molière, keen in his observation of character, had become thoroughly acquainted with the manners, the excessive pretensions, and assumption of airs of exceeding refinement, then prevailing in the coteries of provincial magnates, who were styled *pecques* or *pécores* in Parisian circles.

"Les Précieuses ridicules" was produced in the second year of Molière's establishment in Paris. He was a slow writer, and the play had probably been for some time in preparation, its object—as many French writers suppose—being to hold up to ridicule the extreme affectation, both in manners and language, of the *pecques*. The Hôtel de Rambouillet had been closed to society for more than fifteen years, and Molière had never frequented it. The *salons* open to a social circle in 1659, in the hôtels of *les grands seigneurs et grandes dames*, were not generally literary or very remarkable for refinement. Those of La Rochefoucauld and Madame de Sablé were the exceptions, and approached much nearer than others to the literary and social distinction of Rambouillet.

The great difference between the first *salon* and its imitators was the difference in the ladies that presided over and gave the tone to them. The marquise never had a successor worthy of being com-

pared with her. Her great appreciation of genius and talent, her own accomplishments, high moral principles, and genial, social disposition, were the great attractions in the days of her youth, and the early years of Rambouillet. In its second period, a charming family had grown up around her, and while she had increased in matronly dignity, but remained kindly and cheerful as before, the society had become neither staid nor pretentious. For then the graceful Julie, the coquettish Clare, and the spirited young Marquis de Pisani, together with their companions, the youthful members of the *haute noblesse*, and the general circle formed a happy *mélange* of genius and learning, liveliness, wit, youth, and beauty ; assembled for pleasant conversation, learned discussion, or mirthful amusement, without the then usual alloy of grossness and ill manners.

The life of a provincial actor—especially at a period when coarseness and depravity, even in the higher ranks of society, were general—was little calculated to inspire respect for the decencies of speech and conduct. Molière had none. And the *précieuses* at this time, in their zeal to oppose the prevailing corruption, and to offer an example of delicacy of taste and sentiment, of urbanity of manners and refinement in language, fell into the error of carrying all this to the extreme of affectation, and rendering ridiculous a commendable intention. Molière availed himself (so it has been suggested) of this fatal mistake to name his play “*Les précieuses ridicules*”—his satire on his provincial patrons serving also for a satirical attack on the *précieuses* of the capital. This may be an erroneous view of the question, but Roederer—who thoroughly studied that

period, and especially all that relates to Rambouillet and *les précieuses*—is of opinion that Molière has been misunderstood. He conceives that his sarcasm was aimed at the affectations and hypocrisy of the “*pécores provinciales et bourgeoises*,” and that if he succeeded in purging the language of some of their ridiculous forms of expression, the credit of banishing both from it, and from manners, the grossness, obscenity, and shameless effrontery Molière encouraged, is due to the illustrious women of the Rambouillet school and their successors.

The Duc de Montausier’s twelve years’ devotion to Julie d’Angennes is supposed to be referred to in the theory of Cathos (“*Précieuses ridicules*”), but when it is explained that the duc was a Calvinist, the passage loses its point. If Madolon be meant for Madeleine, the portrait bears no resemblance to her. The “*Précieuses*” was not in verse. Some persons prefer Molière’s prose plays, yet it is probable that his plays would have been less generally known had all been written in prose—his versification being easy, and his meaning clearly and naturally expressed, so that the mind readily receives and retains the impression he would convey to it, while the flowing rhymes linger long in the memory.

Molière was well received in the *salon* of Ninon, which was then frequented by the most brilliant and *spirituel* society in Paris. As she advanced in years her reputation increased. Ninon had become too familiar an epithet; she was now Mademoiselle de Lenclos, *une femme d’esprit*, and a person of great consideration. In her *salon* Molière may have acquired his knowledge of the “*Précieuses*,” for of the fashionable follies, amusements, or vices of the capital he

would have known nothing, while in the provinces ; as no newspapers then carried, daily, minute particulars of all that was going on in Paris to every part of France. Ninon had wittily said of the *précieuses* that they were "*Les Jansénistes d'amour*," and the *mot* had found favor. The gentle Jansenism of Madame de Sablé tolerated all that conduced to render existence pleasant ; but the pure Jansenism of Port Royal des Champs was as intolerant of pleasures and amusements as Calvinism itself, and, particularly, it inveighed against the theatre. Between Molière and the Jansenists there was therefore a natural antipathy, like that between the king and the *précieuses*, as representatives of the Jansenism of love.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Distress in France.—The Treaty of the Pyrenees.—The Restoration of Charles II.—Maria Theresa of Spain.—Bridal Cortège of Louis XIV.—The Cardinal-Minister.—Hercules in Love.—Parental Authority of Mazarin.—Return of Condé and Les Frondeurs.—Madame de Scudéry.—Scarron.—Death of Mazarin.—Affected Grief of Louis XIV.

THE year 1659 was one of distress and suffering in France to those who had to bear the burden of taxation. Mazarin's fraudulent measures for enriching himself made it ever increasingly oppressive, and every one's cash-box was empty save that of the all-powerful minister. When the king wanted a little pocket-money, and applied for it to the *surintendant des finances*, that very amiable functionary would reply, "Sire, there is no money in your majesty's coffers, but Monsieur le Cardinal will lend you some."

Besides the necessity for supplying by some means the urgently-pressed wants of the king, large sums were still needed for carrying on the war with Spain. The country, however, sighed for peace, and as its finances were exhausted, Mazarin's wishes and views were in sympathy with it. The result was the famous treaty of the Pyrenees. The cardinal, in person, concluded it with Don Louis de Haro, after some months had been spent in settling the important question of precedence; for the cardinals claimed equality with kings, and the cardinal-minister of France (which assumed to be pre-eminent among the

nations of Europe) was not disposed on such an occasion to abate one tittle of his pretensions. As his power was now greater than even that of Richelieu had been, so the once *doux* and, when expedient, humble Mazarin, now displayed greater magnificence and regal state than his arrogant and tyrannical predecessor had done.

During the conferences of the French and Spanish plenipotentiaries, Prince Charles Stuart—who hoped that some clause favorable to himself might be introduced into the treaty, now Cromwell was dead—vainly endeavored to obtain an interview with either. They not only declined to discuss his claims, but even to admit him to their august presence. The French court had gone into mourning for Cromwell—Charles's prospect of ever reigning in England being considered a hopeless one. Yet before the treaty of peace was signed, and the arrangements for the marriage of the king, by proxy, with Maria Theresa of Spain were completed, Richard Cromwell had given up the Protectorship, and Charles was firmly seated on the English throne.

Notwithstanding the emptiness of the exchequer, the preparations in Paris for the public entry of the bride and bridegroom were on a scale more extensive and magnificent than any that the inhabitants of the old city had hitherto witnessed. A triumphal arch, of which Claude Perrault gave the design, was erected at the end of the Avenue de Vincennes. The Porte St. Antoine was entirely rebuilt, and elaborately sculptured. Anne of Austria, who forty-five years before had passed along the same *route*—a girl-bride with her boy-husband—was now seated at one of the windows of the Hôtel de Beauvais in the Rue

St. Antoine, wrapped in "*une mante noire*," to witness the entry of the triumphal *cortège* of Louis XIV. and Maria Theresa, her niece. The young queen was of the same age as the king—twenty-two. She was not beautiful, but was gentle and amiable, and in appearance very youthful, from the childlike slightness of her figure and her diminutive height.

Those monstrosities, very high head-dresses (*coiffures étagées*) and very high-heeled shoes, were introduced to give her an air of more importance ; but as all the ladies of her court wore them, her want of dignity, from the insignificance of her person, was none the less apparent. The contrast between the figure of the little timid queen-consort and that of the Juno-like queen-mother was very striking, and not favorable to the former. Her knowledge of French was exceedingly limited, and it does not appear that she ever acquired any great fluency in it. Louis had attempted, when the marriage was definitively arranged, to make some acquaintance with Spanish, but had not been very successful. The habits of idleness he had been brought up in had indisposed his mind to study, and he was incapable of that sustained attention and application necessary to become master of a language.

Attended by a numerous suite, Louis set out to receive his bride at the frontier, and the marriage was solemnized on the 9th of June, 1660. On the 26th of August they made their public entry. Maria Theresa, arrayed in white satin and wearing a profusion of pearls, looked a very interesting pretty little girl as she reclined on the cushions of a magnificently painted and gilded triumphal car. It was lined with rich crimson velvet, and numberless sculp-

tured and gilded loves, doves, and cupids were grouped around it. A royal mantle of violet velvet, lined with white satin and embroidered with *fleurs-de-lis* in pearls and gold, was tastefully arranged on her shoulders, and partially covered her *petite personne*. She carried a superb Moorish fan. Her Spanish gloves were splendidly embroidered, and had tassels of pearls, and a veil or mantilla of transparent gold blonde shaded her face. Beside the car rode Louis XIV., a fine young man with a very grand air, and, at a short distance, handsome. The smallpox had slightly damaged the smoothness of his skin and clearness of complexion. This horrible disease had attacked him in his childhood, but with less virulence than too frequently was the case at that period ; so that though traces of it were visible in his face, they had not produced any actual disfigurement.

Louis' dress rivalled in magnificence that of his bride. His coat was of cloth of gold, covered with black lace. Ruffles and collar of white point-lace, of the most exquisite fineness ; embroidered gloves ; a diamond-hilted sword ; and a plumed hat, looped with a diamond that glittered like a star of the first magnitude. Boots of embroidered leather, and gold spurs elaborately wrought ; a charger that pranced and curvetted and seemed as proud as its rider, and was no less richly caparisoned. A brilliant retinue followed ; *grands seigneurs* all of them, and their dress similar to that of the king. Not the least grand part of the show was the cardinal-minister, in a splendid carriage—the panels painted by Le Brun, whom Fouquet then patronized. A company of *mousquetaires* escorted him, riding on either side of his car-

riage, his own guards following. He was even more meagre than when he set out for the Pyrenees. He looked careworn and anxious, and there was a feverish glitter in his deep set Italian eyes.

Surrounded by all the trappings of royalty, he excited considerable attention, more indeed than seemed to be agreeable to him—perhaps a thought of the Fronde flashed across his mind, and a reminiscence of "*À bas le Mazarin!*" echoed in his ears. But all such cries were at an end, and the throng in the streets was an admiring one, without a thought of sedition.

"*Dieu! quel joli garçon!*" exclaimed the women, who pushed and scrambled to have a good look at the king as he passed.

"*Ah!*" said another, "*que cette petite femme doit être heureuse!*"

"*Que le Mazarin a l'air malade,*" whispered one man to another with bated breath, but with a gleam of joy on his countenance.

And thus the bridal *cortège* passed on to the Louvre.*

A succession of *fêtes* and entertainments followed. Molière and his troupe performed before the bridal party; but the principal theatrical entertainment was the Italian opera of "*Ercole Amante.*" Italian artists came from Italy, by Mazarin's order, for its representation. Between the acts were *ballets*, arranged with reference to the subject of the opera, and which were danced by the king and queen and the ladies

* In a letter of Madame Scarron to a friend, she describes the bridal procession at some length. She was amongst the crowd of spectators, and it was on this occasion that (according to the idea of Roederer) she fell in love with the king.

and gentlemen of the court. The Abbé Milani sang one of the principal parts of the opera, and two French *artistes*, Mesdemoiselles St. Hilaire and La Barre, made their *débuts* in it. "Ercole Amante" was the first opera played in France with an overture.

Philippe, Monsieur, during these bridal *fêtes* had taken a great fancy (one can hardly accuse him of falling in love) to the lively Henriette d'Angleterre, sister of Charles II. He desired to marry her ; but Mazarin so strongly opposed it that Philippe was obliged to yield. So much had Anne of Austria brought up her sons in blind obedience to the will of the cardinal, that, from habit, they continued to allow him to exercise the authority of a father over them, while she fretted under the yoke she had prepared for herself, and now was unable to throw off. The king at times displayed a little impatience of control, but wanted resolution to make the necessary effort to be free. Knowing that he could not be king while the cardinal lived, he turned again to his pleasures, and displayed his fine figure in the grave dances of "*les ballets sérieux* ;" his dexterity in *les courses de bagues*, in the grounds of the Palais Royal, and his taste for magnificence and display, in the grand *carrousels* in the court of the Louvre.

1660 was an eventful year to France. The great Condé returned to his country, as by the Treaty of the Pyrenees it was stipulated that he should be allowed to do, together with all the *Frondeurs* then in banishment who had been compromised by joining in his rebellion. Gaston, Duc d'Orleans, died at Blois about this time ; but his daughter, la Grande Mademoiselle, and *les dames Frondeuses* received per-

mission again to appear at court. Madame la Princesse was dead, also the Duc de Longueville ; and the duchess was living in strict retirement at a distant estate. When Mademoiselle paid her first visit to the court, Anne of Austria received her with a great show of affection, and presented her herself to the king. "*Voilà !*" she said, "*une demoiselle qui a été bien méchante, mais qui promet d'être bien sage à l'avenir.*" The king then embraced her. "I ought to throw myself at your feet !" exclaimed Mademoiselle. "I rather should throw myself at yours, my cousin," replied the king, "when I hear you speak thus." Many more compliments followed, *de part et d'autre*, and thus they were reconciled, or affected to be.

Georges de Scudéry, with his wife and son, also reappeared in Paris, and made his peace with the court. His wife's relative, the Duc de St. Aignan, presented him to the king, who, in consideration of his literary renown, which at one time had rivalled that of Corneille, gave him a pension, and conferred a benefice on his son, a child of five, already destined for the Church. Georges survived but a few years longer. His widow, still young, was well received and much esteemed in society. She wrote those pretty *bagatelles* in verse, then so greatly in favor and fashion, and was lively and witty, and distinguished for her elegance of manner.

Poor Scarron also was dead, and, according to De Beaumelle and other writers, the piety of his wife had so much influence upon him, that he died in the odor of sanctity. Madame Scarron was, therefore, as successful in turning her poor crippled scapegrace from the error of his ways, and saving his soul, as was Madame de Maintenon in bringing about the

same happy result in the case of her magnificent bashaw.

The changes that had occurred in society, the reconciliations effected, the deaths that had taken place, the many new names that were rising into notice in literature, in the arts, etc.—all seemed to announce the dawn of a new era in France. In 1661 the health of Mazarin gradually declined ; he was worn out by the cares, anxieties, and agitation of mind he had undergone during the last eight years, in order securely to retain the reins of government, while he heaped up wealth, of which he had little enjoyment, except, perhaps, in the pleasure of amassing it. He was anxious about it at the last ; and, as if to stamp with legal right his possession of such enormous wealth, he determined to run the risk of presenting it wholly to the king. Louis accepted the gift, and the cardinal remained in miserable suspense for three whole days, trembling lest the ill-gotten treasure should be irrecoverably lost to his family. Those three days must have seemed to him as long as three years ; but at the end of them, Louis decided to restore the gift.

On the 9th of March, 1661, Mazarin died. His exit from the world's stage is said to have been the most edifying part of his career. When the long-desired event became known, *bourgeois* met *bourgeois* with the joyful salutation, "*Enfin, le Mazarin est mort !*" Even the queen-mother seemed relieved by it. But the king, putting into practice the lessons of dissimulation which she and his foster-father had so sedulously taught him, affected grief for the loss he had sustained. "*Il sera un grand roi,*" Mazarin had said many years before, "*il ne dit pas un mot de ce qu'il*

pense.” His secret satisfaction, however, peeped out when he said openly that he “knew not what he might have been tempted to do had the cardinal lived much longer.”

The court mourned only for royalty ; but Henry IV., in ordering a court mourning for “*la belle Gabrielle*,” had furnished a precedent for departing from the customary restriction, and for the first time since that event (unless the mourning for Cromwell be considered an instance of the same kind), the precedent was followed at Mazarin’s death. Black and violet were worn for three months, and the wits wrote the cardinal’s epitaph :

“ Ci gît l’Éminence deuxième,
Dieu nous garde de la troisième.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Philippe, Monsieur, becomes Duc d'Orleans.—Marriage of Philippe.—Henriette d'Angleterre.—The Palais Royal given to Philippe.—Molière's Success as a Courtier.—Jean Baptiste Lulli.—His Skill as a Violinist.—French Academy of Music.—Musical Entertainments.—The Lyric Poet, Quinault.—Racine's Bridal Ode to the Queen.—The Man in the Iron Mask.

THOUGH the court was in mourning, it caused no interruption to its round of pleasures. Philippe, Monsieur, immediately after the cardinal's death, carried out his wish of marrying Henriette, though both Louis and the queen-mother were opposed to it. Gaston's title of Duc d'Orleans was conferred on him, and Philippe became the head of the new branch of the Orleans family. The balls and *fêtes* and theatrical entertainments that took place on the marriage of the king were renewed with increased animation to celebrate the nuptials of Monsieur. Henriette in features greatly resembled her brother, Charles II. This conveys to the mind no idea of female beauty. We learn also that she was excessively thin, and had the not uncommon defect of being "*légèrement bossue.*" But she was amiable and witty; her manners were pleasing, and she had a very sweet voice and a winning smile. Monsieur, according to Madame de La Fayette, "*était d'une beauté et d'une taille plus convenable à une princesse, qu'à un prince,*" and Madame de Motteville describes his great beauty as a child. Other accounts speak less favorably of his personal appearance. His tastes were effeminate.

He was fond of rings, jewels, perfumes, ribands, and such like feminine adjuncts of the toilette, and affected excessive *recherche* and nicety in dress.

Though his depravity in after years was great, Monsieur was now a favorite with the court ; for he infused life and spirit into its amusements, which Louis XIV. did not. Much rivalry and little affection had subsisted between the brothers from childhood. Louis, with his imaginary god-like attributes, was both oppressed and oppressive ; Philippe, to whom no such halo of glory was supposed to belong, had ever been disposed to rebel against his brother's great pretensions and airs of superiority. Though one was no less vicious and ignorant than the other, yet Philippe as a child had displayed some intellectual capacity, which was immediately stifled, and now, at the age of twenty, he was more animated and lively than Louis. He was also restless and capricious, and displayed a degree of affability that permitted almost of an approach to friendship with some of the courtiers who, as inferior beings, worshipped the great Louis.

Henriette was then just seventeen. Brought up in the French court, she had acquired the ease and grace of manner, and perfection in the language, which at that period distinguished French women of rank, and which gave her a decided advantage over the timid young queen. Maria Theresa was scarcely able to make herself understood in French, and there was a rigidity in her manners that, to one accustomed until the age of twenty-two to the extreme formalities with which Spanish royalty then surrounded itself, was not easy to shake off. The marriage festivities of Philippe and Henriette were,

therefore, far more lively and spirited than were those of the king and queen. As Philippe was so bent on the match, though his family was opposed to it, it may be inferred that he had some affection for his sprightly cousin. She, however, had none for him, and clouds soon arose to darken the sunny atmosphere in which, as a pair of brilliant butterflies, they then flitted about and enjoyed themselves.

The Palais Royal had become part of the appanage of the young Duc d'Orleans. At its theatre, in 1661, Molière produced "L'École des Maris." The muse of comedy had been much neglected, for Mazarin loved music, and had shown greater favor to the introduction of opera. But the national taste seemed rather to incline to the play. Fifteen or sixteen years had elapsed since the cardinal, to amuse the queen-regent and her court, had brought singers and machinists from Italy to produce the "Finza Pazzo" at the theatre of the Petit Bourbon ; yet music as an art had made no progress in France. The royal band of twenty-four violins still sufficed to play at the court balls and *ballets*. Dancing continued to be assiduously practised, and Louis, for ten years after his marriage, did not think it derogatory to seek flattery and applause by displaying his Terpsichorean powers in public. But the tragedy of "Britannicus" being played before him one evening in 1670, at St. Germain, the lines—

" Pour toute ambition, pour vertu singulière,
Il excelle à conduire un char dans la carrière,
À disputer des prix indignes de ses mains,
À se donner lui-même en spectacle aux Romains,"

suddenly struck him as applying to himself ; and henceforth in public he figured no more in the *ballet*.

Anne of Austria, whose most favorite amusement had once been the play, from advancing years, as well as from the first symptoms of the painful disease of which she died having appeared, was now indifferent to it. She attended it merely to please the king ; the card-table and her oratory were her chief distractions. The preaching of Bossuet, who (if such a word may be used to express his grand oratorical style) preached his first sermon this year before the court, began greatly to interest her ; while the talent of Molière, who played the principal part in his own pieces, once more drew her occasionally to the theatre. Molière assiduously sought the favor of Louis XIV., and with so much tact and adroitness, that his talent, as a courtier, was rewarded with success which his great genius, as a dramatic poet, would not alone have secured for him.

Side by side with the increasing favor and popularity of Jean Baptiste Molière, another great genius was rising in public estimation, as well as in the favor of the king. This was Jean Baptiste Lulli. While serving as page to la Grande Mademoiselle, he amused himself in his leisure hours with playing the guitar and violin. Mademoiselle, perceiving his talent, gave him a master, and after a few lessons the pupil greatly surpassed his teacher. He continued diligently to practise alone, and for some years devoted himself to the theoretical study of music ; at first under Cambert, the organist of the collegiate church of St. Honoré, who, in 1659, composed the music for a pastoral which the Abbé Perrin had written in verse, and which was sung at a *fête* given by M. de la Haye at Issy. Contrary to the custom of the time, no dances were introduced ; but the music

was so much admired, and the singing of Mdlle. de St. Hilaire, who took the principal part, gave so much importance to the little operetta, that Mazarin, hearing of it, had it played before the king and the court. Another novelty in it was a concert of flutes, instruments which had never before been heard in a theatre. Lulli, who played in it, had aided Cambert in arranging the score.

The Abbé Perrin's musical pastoral pleased the court as much as it had pleased the company at Issy ; it served also to bring Lulli prominently into notice, and to give France a great musician. He was no longer of the household of Mademoiselle ; she had some time before dismissed him, in high indignation at hearing a song of the Fronde that greatly shocked her, sung by Lulli, who had set it to music. Lulli was now twenty-six. He had been brought to France when a boy of thirteen ; he had, therefore, had the advantage of acquiring the language perfectly, and of overcoming a difficulty which had been found a stumbling-block to success by two Italian composers. Without understanding or taking into account the difference between the spoken language and musical declamation, in the lengthening of the final syllables, they had endeavored to put music to French words.

Lulli has been called "*le père de la vraie musique en France.*" When compelled to leave his first patroness, he was recommended by Cambert and Barully to fill a vacancy in the king's band of twenty-four violins. His superior skill as a violinist was soon remarked, and the king—expressly for Lulli to take the lead—desired him to form a band of twelve of the most able performers he could find, or train to

proficiency, to be called "La Bande des petits Violons du Roi," and so ably were they trained by their leader, that the performances of the "Petits Violons" soon greatly surpassed that of the grand twenty-four. Lulli's compositions were for some time found difficult to execute ; so entirely was musical art in its infancy. He was the first musician in France who introduced basses and fugues. His celebrity both as a composer and performer was unequalled in the seventeenth century. He played the violin, we are told, with great feeling and expression, causing frequently deep emotion in those who heard him.

Lulli's genius and ability brought him both wealth and consideration, and he became a person of importance at the French court. He established the Royal Academy of Music, for which the king granted him letters-patent in 1671. He appears to have been a handsome man, of very agreeable manners. The king created for him the post of "Surintendant de la Musique du Roi," a sinecure at first, but which Lulli, in his enthusiasm for his art, availed himself of to introduce a taste for the cultivation of music, both vocal and instrumental, amongst the younger ladies of the court ; and in this his personal advantages aided him not a little. He was fortunate, too, in meeting with so able a man as Quinault, the poet, to furnish him with *libretti* for his operas. They were very different from the ridiculous trash of modern *libretti*, being in themselves poems that may be read with pleasure without the aid of music to give effect to them. But the words of the poet and the strains of the musician were so happily combined that they lent new beauty and tenderness to each

other, of which scenes from "Atys," "Armide," and "Roland" have been cited as examples.

At the theatre of "Le Jeu de Paume," Lulli gave a musical entertainment called "Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus." Between the acts there were appropriate *ballets*, and several grandees of the court exhibited in them their skill in the dance.

Lulli excelled especially in recitative, in which he remained unrivalled long after his death. His *collaborateur* shared with him the merit of its excellence, in supplying words worthy of being musically declaimed. Quinault's success in this new kind of poetry excited the jealousy of the poets of the time. They affected to contemn it, as beneath their great poetic powers; and even Boileau attacked him in his satires.

"*Il manquait à Boileau,*" says Voltaire, "*d'avoir sacrifié aux graces; il chercha en vain toute sa vie à humilier un homme qui n'était connu que par elles.*"

Quinault's flowing stanzas were on every one's lips, and his lyric poems survived the music to which they were wedded, and were then supposed to owe their reputation.

During the lifetime of the musician and the poet, the king's highest marks of favor were bestowed on Lulli. Quinault, who was young and, like Lulli, handsome and attractive, had his part in them, but it was a minor one, so far as the king was concerned. Both they and Molière contributed to enliven and vary the bridal *fêtes* and entertainments, and Lulli, in the Marquis de Rieux de Sourdiac, met with a musical patron who afterwards greatly aided him in establishing opera in France. As part of the amusements in celebration of the king's marriage, the marquis

had Corneille's "Toison d'Or" performed at his Château de Neubourg, and with music and scenery.

But Corneille, though he lived upwards of twenty years after these bridal festivities took place, was falling into the sere and yellow leaf period of life. His musical rivals were young men, and Molière, who was then about forty, had already devoted his talents to making propriety of conduct ridiculous, in order to excuse the vices of the king. However, in holding up to derisive laughter those presumptuous mortals who dared to imitate the pompous airs and royal strut of Louis XIV., Molière did but follow Quinault, who in 1663 also produced his comedy of "La Mère coquette," in which "*les marquis*" were first satirized. But le grand Corneille in his time had drawn tears from the eyes—unaccustomed to weeping—of the Grand Condé, on the first representation of "Cinna;" and if he did not acquire wealth, his reputation as a dramatic poet was unrivalled, and his name honored throughout France. Racine, then but twenty, was first inspired to essay his pen in honor of these *fêtes*, and addressed a bridal ode to the king and queen. It was not only graciously accepted, but, to his surprise, it appears, substantially rewarded. This unlooked-for success is said to have determined him to attempt dramatic writing, contrary to the advice of Corneille, who did not recognize in the specimens submitted to him any special talent for the career he proposed to adopt.

It was also in the year 1661, and when the cardinal had been dead but a few months, that that event—so mysterious that the victim of it remains still an unknown personage—occurred in France, the incar-

ceration in the Bastille of the individual called the Man in the Iron Mask. No state secret was probably ever so long and so faithfully kept. He lived in the Bastille forty-two years, lodged and attended as well as it was possible to be in that stronghold, with which are associated so many gloomy reminiscences of deeds of darkness and blood. The governor, and also minister of state, when they visited their prisoner, stood before him uncovered. His table was served abundantly and with the choicest fare. The governor himself served the dishes, then retired. Whatever he expressed a wish for was immediately provided. His dress was rich, indicating a person of high rank, and his habits were those of one accustomed to the refinements and elegancies of life. He wore the finest linen and the richest laces ; whether he always wore his mask—which was cleverly contrived, and must have taken some time to prepare—is not certain. The doctor who attended him occasionally had never seen his face, but was prepossessed in his favor from his pleasing voice and cultivated manner of expressing himself. He uttered no complaints, and entered into no conversation beyond what the object of his physician's visit made needful. When he died he was buried in the cemetery of the church of St. Paul, where Rabelais was buried at the foot of a great tree.

The last person who possessed the secret of who and what this distinguished prisoner was, and the nature of his crime, was the Minister de Chamillart. On his death-bed he was urged by his son-in-law, le Maréchal de la Feuillade, to reveal the secret to him. He however declined. "It is the state's secret,"

was his reply to the maréchal's entreaties. "He had sworn never to reveal it, and it must die with him." And effectually dead and buried the secret remains, and probably will continue to be, until the day of doom.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Cardinal-Minister's Palace.—The Hôtels Mazarin and Nevers.—The Cardinal's Hoarded Wealth.—St. Evremond.—La Bonne Régence.—Nicolas Fouquet.—Character of Fouquet.—The Château de Vaux.—The Sculpture and Paintings.—A Grand Fête-Champêtre.—The Theatre.—The Banquet.—The Picturesque Dresses.—Fouquet's Gallery of Portraits.—The King's Gracious Adieux.—Arrest of Fouquet and Péliisson.

THE vast and sumptuous edifice, with its finely-sculptured *façades* and splendidly decorated interior, which the cardinal-minister had prepared for his residence, occupied, together with its outbuildings and gardens, the extensive tract of ground lying between the Rues Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, Vivienne, De Richelieu, and Colbert. The original building was constructed for the wealthy president, Tubeuf, by the architect, Lemuet. But Mazarin employed François Mansard—who had won celebrity in that *chef-d'œuvre* of his art, le Château de Maisons, near St. Germain, which was wholly designed by him—to add to the hôtel a splendid two-storied gallery. In the upper story were hung the five hundred pictures of the great masters, collected by Mazarin at enormous expense. In the lower gallery were arranged antique statues, busts, marble and bronze vases, and other treasures of art in great number. The domestic offices were enlarged, a handsome chapel was built, and a library, that occupied the sides of the *grand cour d'honneur*, whence access is now obtained

to the various departments of the Bibliothèque Nationale, located in the former abode of the unworthy favorite and minister of Anne of Austria and Louis XIV.

The heirs of Mazarin divided his magnificent hôtel into two separate dwellings. That on the side of the Rue Vivienne retained the name of L'Hôtel Mazarin, and became the residence of le Maréchal de Meilleraie, who, having married Hortense Mancini, was created Duc de Mazarin. The other part was called L'Hôtel de Nevers, and belonged to the cardinal's nephew, Mancini, then Duc de Nevers. Each hôtel had a splendid suite of *salons*, furnished far more luxuriously than the royal residences. The carpets and hangings were the choicest productions of the Gobelins, after the designs of Le Brun, then designer *en chef* of that establishment. Exquisite taste reigned throughout. Cost had not been studied. It was no consideration with the cardinal, while there remained a *pistole* in the public treasury, or any device yet untried by which money could be got from the people. His own hoards he was unwilling to touch. If he could add to them, well and good, but they must not be diminished. He heaped up wealth like a miser. Years after his death, drawers and cabinets were found, containing Spanish doubloons, gold counters, plate and medals. The Duchess Hortense, for amusement, used to throw them out of window to the people.

The mourning of the cardinal's family was no sooner ended than the *salons* of the two hôtels were thrown open, twice in the week, for the reception of the *beau monde*. "*La galanterie Italienne*," introduced at court by Mazarin, and which in the early days of

the regency was not regarded with disfavor by Anne of Austria, prevailed at these *réunions*. “*La galanterie sentimentale*,” of the D’Urfé and Rambouillet schools, had then held in check his insidious attempts to make society even more corrupt than it was inclined to be. The utter subversion of morals was his aim, and, probably, only the intense hatred his burdensome taxation inspired, towards him and everything called Italian, together with the troubles of the Fronde, prevented the court of France under Anne of Austria and Mazarin from becoming the most dissolute one in Europe.

St. Evremond, whose reputation was considerable as a *bel esprit* and a writer of *vers de société*, had employed his pen to cast ridicule on the *Frondeurs*. Consequently he was high in favor with Mazarin, who appointed him one of his suite of gentlemen to accompany him to the Pyrenees. St. Evremond was a lover of the Duchess Hortense as well as of Mdlle. Ninon, and was perhaps a more assiduous frequenter, at this time, of the new *salon* Mazarin than of the *salon* of the Rue des Tournelles. The design of bringing into vogue “*la galanterie Italienne*” was one congenial to his voluptuous nature. He was not a young man when the cardinal died. He was in his forty-eighth year, but his manners were seductive, and he was not then disfigured by the enormous wen that grew between his eyes, and made him so startlingly hideous in after years. He had fought, in his wild youth, at Nordlingen, and had been the guest of the great Condé, which did not prevent him from satirizing the prince and taking a pension for such services from the cardinal. Of the happy times of the regency St. Evremond sang :

“ J’ai vu le bon temps de la bonne régence,
Temps où régnait une heureuse abondance ;
Temps où la ville aussi bien que la cour
Ne respiraient que les jeux et l’amour.
La politique indulgente
De notre nature innocente
Favorisait tous les désirs.
Tout goût paroissait légitime,
La douce erreur ne s’appelait point crime
Les vices délicats se nommaient plaisirs.”

This good time of “ *la bonne liberté* ” St. Evremond was looking forward to seeing revived in the *salons* of the Mancini family. Most unexpectedly, however, these *salons* were closed, and before many *réunions* of much importance had taken place in them. For it was announced that the brilliant Nicolas Fouquet, Marquis de Belle Isle, *surintendant des finances* during the eight years of Mazarin’s reign, and generally regarded as his most probable successor as first minister, had been arrested at Nantes, by the king’s order, and with his secretary Péliisson conveyed to the Bastille.

Consternation, alarm, regret, spread throughout society. Fouquet, it was certain, would not fall alone. Many persons would lose both credit and distinction by an inquiry into his affairs. But, putting all feelings of self-interest aside, Fouquet was a man so very much liked that regret for the misfortune that had befallen him was general and sincere ; except, indeed, among the officials of the government who were to profit by his fall. They pursued him with venomous hate, hoping to bring him to the scaffold. Yet it was rather for the state robberies of the all-powerful and despotic late minister than for depredations of his own that Fouquet suffered.

When Mazarin received back the gift of his enormous wealth, confirmed to him as a present from the king, moved either by jealous fear that another might with equal impunity appropriate the public funds, or by the self-deceptive idea that denunciation of the fault of a subordinate would be atonement for his own crime, he made a communication to the king that excited his wrath against Fouquet, and prejudiced him in favor of Colbert, and other enemies of the *surintendant*.

Fouquet was a wealthy man, and had paid for his appointment a very large sum of money. (All official posts or employments were sold at that time, and many new and useless ones were created by Mazarin expressly to be sold.) The *surintendant des finances* possessed power and influence ; but it was as a man of culture, of refined and fascinating manners, and artistic and literary tastes, that he shone in society. His personal appearance was prepossessing, and the thorough kindness of his disposition won him the esteem and affection of many, who remained true friends to him in misfortune. There was a certain grandeur in his character ; for while liberal and generous in the extreme, he conferred his favors with so much tact, so much delicacy and feeling, that he always appeared to be himself the person obliged. He was a munificent patron of genius and talent, whether literary or artistic. When tested by trouble and great misfortune, he exhibited extraordinary patience, and much elevation of mind. Yet Fouquet had many failings and weaknesses. Amongst them was his worship of the fair sex, and the fair sex generally smiled graciously upon him.

. At no time did Louis XIV. display more vindic-

tiveness, more implacable resentment, than in his rigorous treatment of the Marquis de Belle Isle, whom he made the scapegoat of the cardinal's sins. He may, too, have seen in him, what he in fact was, a man greatly his superior—brilliant, witty, refined, and of cultivated mind—for the king was fully, and often painfully, sensible of his educational deficiencies. Yet he had been an apt scholar in that art which the cardinal thought needful above all others—and upon which Louis XIII. had piqued himself on being so perfect in—dissimulation. For he had resolved on the downfall of his *surintendant* when, with smiling graciousness, he accepted the *fête* Fouquet begged permission to offer him at the Château de Vaux.

This Château de Vaux was a “palace of delights.” Its vast grounds and gardens—then reputed the finest in Europe—had been laid out by the celebrated Le Notre and planted by La Quintinie. Pierre Puget and Coustou had designed and executed the elaborately sculptured fountains. The system of waterworks that supplied them produced effects then unsurpassed, though afterwards far excelled at Versailles and Marly. The site of the château had been admirably chosen, amidst the beautiful scenery of one of nature's most picturesque spots. The foundations were laid, and some progress made in the building, when a design combining greater convenience in the interior arrangements, with finer architectural effects in the exterior, fell under the notice of Fouquet. Immediately he ordered the removal of the portion already constructed, and the recommencement of the château on the new plan, which led to an immense increase in the expense. Accord-

ing to the present value of money, the Château de Vaux cost not less than a million and a half sterling.

The decorations in sculpture and painting of what may be termed the state apartments, were executed by the ablest artists of that day. And all had worked for him *con amore*, as a man of taste who could appreciate their talents, as well as a princely patron. In the great ball-room, Le Brun—to whom Fouquet had given a pension of twelve thousand francs, equal to about fifty thousand of the present time—had displayed his skill both in designing and painting ; and there his young *élève* Jouvenet—the painter of the cupola of the church of St. Louis des Invalides, and who, having met with an accident, in his later years painted with his left hand—learnt from his master's labors the first principles of his art. In other apartments were panel-paintings by Pierre Mignard, the favorite *élève* of Simon Vouet. Pictures from the easel of Santerre and of Claude Lorraine, and the already scarce and much-prized productions of Le Sueur—who died some five years before at the age of thirty-eight—adorned the walls of his private rooms.

To receive the king and queen, the queen-mother, and the court, the gardens, grounds, and fountains were illuminated. A scene of enchantment was produced, amidst which the magnificent marquis, with the marquise, and his mother, the Countess de Vaux, moved as the fairy prince and princesses. What a pang all this splendor occasioned to the self-love of Louis ! It was dazzling, surprising, even to him ; for Fontainebleau, Compiègne, St. Germain, and Versailles, as it then existed, were not to be compared with the Château de Vaux, either for beauty of situation, interior adornment, or luxurious ar-

rangements for personal comfort. Fuel was added to the smouldering flame of his resentment when the delighted, and, as he believed, honored and favored host came forth with "*cette mine riante et fixe*" (as Madame de Sévigné remarks in her letters to M. de Pompome), to receive his royal guests. At Vaux all the ladies found, in their apartments, as in after years was the custom at Marly, a magnificently arranged *toilette à la duchesse*, and everything necessary for patching and painting, and completing their *coiffures* and costume generally, according to the taste and fashion of the time.

Molière had written "*Les Facheux*" especially for the *fêtes* de Vaux, and it was first represented in the theatre of that château. The secretary Péliisson wrote the prologue, which is said to have been witty and clever. The famous Vatel aided in preparing the banquets. He was then *sous-chef* in the kitchen department. Had this most sensitive of cooks fallen on his sword when the distinguished patron in whose service he had graduated in the culinary art fell from his place in society, like a bright meteor from the starry sky, he would have ended his career far more sublimely than by his suicide some years after, when Maître d'hôtel at Chantilly, because of the non-arrival of fish to place before the royal guest of M. le Prince.

The king, looking very handsome and majestic, and concealing his anger under an air of pleased satisfaction with the wonders of Vaux, was conducted through galleries and saloons to the suite of apartments prepared for him. A train of courtiers followed, wearing those blue and crimson casaques, embroidered in silver and gold, which the king him-

self had designed, and which it was a distinguished mark of royal favor to be permitted to wear. The company generally was extremely picturesque ; and the men, with their velvets and laces, plumed hats, and diamond-hilted swords, were, no doubt, more interesting than they are in their prosaic costume of the present day. The little queen, perched up on her high-heeled shoes, and apparently about to be crushed under her towering head-dress, was the centre of a very brilliant throng. Happily, Anne of Austria was able to be present, and, by her influence over the king, restrained him from arresting, in the midst of the *fête*, the man whose hospitality he had accepted, and who had exerted himself to receive him with all due honor.

Fouquet's crest was a squirrel ascending a tree, and the motto, "*Quo non ascendam ?*" Louis, who was supposed to have translated the "*Commentaries*," did not understand this. At his request, it was explained to him, "*Où ne monterai-je point ?*" As it was rather ostentatiously displayed frequently to meet the eye, the king chose to see in it a revelation of ambitious views. Everywhere, too, an asp was painted at the foot of the tree, and was supposed to be an allusion to Fouquet's inveterate enemy, Colbert, whose crest was an asp. This, together with the fact that he was fortifying Belle Isle, also, that he was Procureur-Général du Parlement, and had everywhere numerous partizans, made the king anxious that there should be no delay in securing his person and taking possession of his papers.

Some two or three writers of the time mention that the king was further irritated by seeing the portrait of Mdlle. de La Vallière amongst a number of others,

forming a gallery of *belles dames* who were the objects of Fouquet's admiration. The portrait of Madame Scarron was said to have been also a prominent one. But it is more likely that he possessed neither of these portraits ; for Mdlle. de La Vallière could have but very recently arrived from Blois, to be one of the *filles d'honneur* of Madame, with whom the king was then on terms of such very intimate friendship, that Monsieur complained of it to the queen-mother. He thought there was too much sentimentality in it, considering their relationship both to him and to each other. And if Monsieur's idea of propriety was shocked, there must have been some reason for complaint.

At the age of sixteen, Louis had refused to dance with Henriette, who was then but eleven, because he "did not like little girls." When his brother was so anxious to marry her, the extreme slightness of her figure led the king contemptuously to remark, "*Qu'elle n'était que des os ;*" for without *embonpoint*—in compliment to Anne of Austria, probably, who had enough and to spare of it—pretensions to beauty were grudgingly allowed. But when Henriette was raised to the dignity of "Madame," and freed from the restraint in which both her mother and the queen, her aunt, had strictly held her, Louis was fascinated by her youthful vivacity, her pleasant temper, and constant flow of spirits. Madame took the lead in the amusements of the court ; the timid little queen was thrown quite into the shade, and, both in Paris and at Fontainebleau, the frivolous pastimes in which these royal personages passed the greater part of the day were arranged in accordance with the capricious

tastes of Henriette. The king was always at her side, whether bathing, dressing, or dining.

Dinner ended, they set off in the same carriage, the numerous company of ladies and courtiers following—all in full feather, and accompanied by a carriageful of fiddlers—to seek some suitable spot where they could trip it gaily on the greensward. There, well into the night, or rather early morning, they danced and flirted ; lighted, in the absence of chaste Cynthia's silvery beams, by the lurid rays of many torches. Weary of dancing, they mounted their horses, for though they went in carriages, they returned as a prancing cavalcade, enlivening their night-ride home through the sombre woods with laughter and snatches of song. An hilarious supper followed ; then, wearied nature sought in sleep to recruit its powers for another well-spent day. Monsieur by no means objected to this kind of life, and there were many fair ladies in the company whose society he preferred to that of Madame. But he objected to Louis' finding pleasure in it. The queen-mother was also much annoyed, because he no longer spent his spare time with her and her ladies.

Madame's spiritual director was desired to reprove her for her heedlessness, and the queen-mother remonstrated with her son. The king, to silence the gossip of the court, affected to make love to two of Anne of Austria's *filles d'honneur*, Mdlles. de Pons and De Chémérault, and, at the same time, to one of *les filles de Madame*, Mdle. de La Vallière. The Comte de Guiche, said to have been a lover of La Vallière, withdrew in favor of the king, and made love to madame herself. This new arrangement did not satisfy Monsieur. He and De Guiche had some

very warm words on the subject, and spoke their minds freely to each other. The Maréchal de Grammont, De Guiche's father, was requested to interfere. A finished courtier, he was astonished at his son's audacity, and at once despatched him to Paris, forbidding him to return to Fontainebleau. Monsieur also objected to the king's attentions to his wife's maid of honor, and dissatisfaction was general. La Vallière, says Madame de La Fayette, was "*Douce et naïve, et avait peu de fortune ;*" and another writer adds, "*Fade, boiteuse, et marquée de la petite vérole.*" She was unused to court life, and, flattered by the attentions of the king, fell deeply in love with him. He was not then in love with her ; but the affair of the king and Madame followed too close upon her marriage with Monsieur to allow of any credit being given to the story that Fouquet had been La Vallière's lover, and had already a portrait of her hanging in his cabinet.

Fouquet, at the time of the Fronde, took the royalist side. He was a partizan of Mazarin, and aided in smoothing the way for his return to France. Scarron was odious to him, and his widow applied to him in vain for a pension. It was at the instance of the Chevalier de Meri that the queen-mother continued to her the pension of 2,000 fr. she had granted to Scarron. It again passed away from her on the queen's death, and was renewed only after the lapse of some years, at Madame de Montespan's solicitation. It was, therefore, as unlikely that Fouquet possessed the portrait of Madame Scarron as that of Mdlle. de La Vallière. The memoirs of the time, that refer to these affairs of gallantry, as they are

termed, cannot be wholly relied upon. Malevolence, bitterness of spirit, wounded vanity, guided the pens of many writers ; gross flattery, adulation, and a desire to appear to have been at the bottom of every secret, characterize others. One sees nothing but vice and deformity ; another, nothing but virtue and beauty, and in the self-same person. This, however, is certain—society of every grade was thoroughly corrupt ; rotten at the core.

Red-heeled boots, slashed doublets, and flowing wigs, cordelières of pearls, Moorish fans, masks, patches, and paint ; monumental head-dresses, and the thousand other items indispensable to the toilets of fine ladies and gentlemen of the Louis XIV. period, have a charmingly picturesque effect, seen through the long vista of two centuries or more, and heightened by the glamour of *la grande politesse, et la grande galanterie*, of the Grand Monarque and his court. Life seems to have been with them one long fancy dress-ball, a never-ending carnival, a perpetual whirl, an endless succession of *fêtes* and *carrousels*—a period exhibiting, in its various phases, much animation and dramatic effect overlaying frivolity and vice.

To re-enter for a moment the Château de Vaux : the *fêtes* being ended, the king took leave of his magnificent host—a smiling, gracious leave—“ *il lui fit des caresses, et lui traita avec distinction,*” but there was rancor in his heart. To attempt to arrest Fouquet on his own domain was deemed hazardous. His rescue and escape from the country were thought probable, and his enemies sought his life. On some pretence he was called to Nantes, and

there he and Péliſſon were arrested. From Nantes they were conveyed to Paris, and imprisoned in the Bastille for three years, while their papers were being examined, and evidence, true or false, against Fouquet was being hunted up, preparatory to a mock trial.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Mazarin's Improvements in the Old City.—The Paul Cliffords of Paris.—The King Returns to the Louvre.—The Grande Façade.—Perrault, Mansard, and Bernini.—Le Château de Maisons.—Bernini Returns to Rome.—The Louvre and its Doctor.—The Louvre Abandoned.—“Un Favori sans Mérite.”—Improvements in Paris.—L'Académie des Belles-Lettres.—Learned Societies Founded.—Louis, under Colbert and Lyonne.

“WHAT was done,” one may inquire, “for the improvement of Paris during the eight years’ reign of Mazarin?” “Very little indeed,” must be the reply. The works at the Louvre were almost entirely suspended. The smouldering political agitation that survived the Fronde made the work of crushing out the spirit of the people seem a more desirable undertaking than that of improving or embellishing the capital. Some few of the narrowest of its narrow streets had been widened; with the view of rendering the formation of barricades less easy, in the event of renewed revolt, and of affording space, in case of necessity, for bringing through them the small pieces of cannon then in use. For lighting and cleansing the city, or for establishing an efficient police, nothing had been done. A few fine hôtels had been built by the *noblesse*; but, enclosed in large gardens, and separated from their dirty surroundings by walls, high and thick, they only still further impeded the circulation of air, and deepened the gloom of those gloomy back streets—the lurking-places of plague and smallpox.

For the lower ranks of the social scale, this boasted old Paris, this city of walled palaces and monastic abodes of a wealthy priesthood, this "diamond and carbuncle of European capitals," was still a terrible place. Even the high and mighty were, sometimes, made to feel the desirableness of adopting more stringent measures for the security of the property and lives of the inhabitants. In 1660, *Made-moiselle de Scudéry*, writing to *Godeau*, says: "During the last six weeks there have been many most audacious robberies in the streets of Paris. More than forty carriages, of persons of quality, have been stopped and plundered by the robbers, who are always on horseback, and in parties of from fifteen to twenty." This exceeds the audacity of the bold highwaymen of the glorious days of Louis' rival—our own Charles II., of blessed memory. They had the grace to keep out of the streets of "London town," and to confine their operations to districts not approaching nearer to it than Kensington, Knightsbridge, or, at the boldest venture, Hyde Park.

A few years later, she writes on the same subject, with little variation of details, but complaining also of the losses she herself sustains from the frequent visits of daring thieves to her dwelling; and further, that these depredations, together with the non-payment of pensions she is supposed to be in receipt of, have reduced her to very great straits.*

* The payment of pensions granted in those days was very problematical, at least as to time. Often they ran into long arrears, causing considerable inconvenience to needy literary men, and other recipients of the state's bounty; but in amount they were usually liberal.

When Mazarin died, Louis forsook the Palais Royal, which became the property of the Orleans family, and established himself at the Louvre.- In 1661 a fire occurred there, in the grand gallery, and the necessity for immediately repairing it caused the works, generally, to be resumed with greater diligence. The superintendence of them was offered to Mansard, who declined it, except on conditions, relating to the designing of the new portions of the edifice, that were thought likely to entail too heavy an expenditure. Louis was at that time engaged in settling the new financial arrangements with Colbert, who was then under the delusion that economy, thenceforth, was to be the order of the day.

Some portion of the north wing of the Louvre, and of the *façade* looking towards the Seine, had been erected by the architects, Levau and Dorbay, from the designs of Claude Perrault. To complete the exterior, the fourth *façade*—facing the east and enclosing the court—had yet to be constructed, and the king desired, as it formed the grand entrance to the palace, that it should exceed the others in magnificence. This, with the new buildings at St. Germain, was the work offered to and declined by Mansard. Other architects most in repute were then requested to send in designs, but none was considered quite satisfactory. In this dilemma it was determined to seek the aid of Bernini, reputed the first architect in Europe. The pope, Alexander VII., was scarcely willing to allow this great artiste to cross the Alps ; but, after considerable diplomacy on the part of Louis, permission was given. Carriages were sent on to bring him to Paris, and generally the arrangements made for his journey were as

if intended for a sovereign prince. He was conducted, on his arrival, to the Louvre and to the apartments prepared for his reception, with almost as much ceremony and distinction as the pontiff himself could have looked for, had he honored France with a visit.

Bernini was, however, less anxious to receive compliments and ceremonious visits than to see what Paris had to show in the way of architectural *chef-d'œuvre*. As France had sent so far for an architect, his expectations were not excessive. Great, then, was his astonishment when he saw what had already been accomplished after the designs of Perrault, and greater still when he was shown those, which Perrault had laid before the king, for the grand *façade* which he had been brought from Italy to design and construct. The Château de Maisons, which Bernini inspected, revealed also that France had in François Mansard another great master of his art; and many others, of almost equal note, were afterwards made known to him in their works, when he visited in Paris the fine hôtels of their construction.* Christopher Wren—not yet Sir Christopher—was in Paris at that time, and mentions, in one of his letters, having seen “Old Bernini, who allowed him just a glimpse of the design he had prepared for the Louvre.”

* The Marquis de Maisons, when he employed Mansard to build him his château near St. Germain, left him wholly unfettered in planning and designing it. Mansard, following entirely his own judgment and fancy, produced a *chef-d'œuvre*—the finest of his works. It was expeditiously completed, and for the moderate cost of 40,000 gold pieces of the coinage of Charles IX. that had been found in a cellar when making excavations for the enlarging of the marquis's hôtel in the Rue des Propvaires, Paris.

But, like many other Italian artists, Bernini thought the climate of France detestable. The romantic philosopher, Descartes, had left Paris because he fancied its atmosphere too light and stimulating, producing too much play of the imagination. The Italians, on the contrary, felt that it put the imagination into fetters, allowed of no flights of fancy, generated no brilliant ideas ; so that from the time of Francis I. to that of Louis XIV. they were all in haste to fly from the stifled, walled-up city, and its pent-up, pestiferous air. Cabals and intrigues also met Bernini at every turn, yet the king, in October, 1665, laid the first stone of the grand entrance, intended to have been constructed after Bernini's design. The work, however, was not proceeded with. Delays and difficulties arose, or were purposely made to prevent further progress, and Bernini, after eight months' residence in Paris, wearied with being continually thwarted and opposed, threw up his commission in disgust, and returned to Rome.

He was paid from the time of his arrival to that of his departure at the rate of five louis d'or per day ; and although his visit had been utterly sterile in results, the king, besides making him a present of fifty thousand crowns, conferred on him a pension of two thousand, and another for his son of five hundred crowns. The great Roman architect had not been nearly so well rewarded for constructing the grand colonnade surrounding the court of St. Peter's at Rome.* If he thought but poorly of Paris, he thought highly of the munificence of the king. The

* Sir Christopher Wren was paid for building St. Paul's and superintending and designing generally after the great fire of London, £200 a year, which included all expenses for plans, etc.

great honors with which he was received were renewed on his departure, and in acknowledgment of them and the monarch's liberality, Bernini sent, as a present, an equestrian statue of Louis XIV., executed at Rome, for the gardens of Versailles. His designs for the *façade* were laid aside, and the grand ones of Perrault received the approbation of the king. The Louvre was therefore "again," as the wits of the day said, "put into the hands of the doctor."

Claude Perrault, like Sir Christopher Wren, had not been regularly trained for an architect. His natural bent, as well as his great ability as a draughtsman, led him to architectural studies. He was of the medical profession, but no longer practised as a physician, except in the case of a few private friends, whose faith in his skill to repair the dilapidations of the human frame was as great as their belief that he surpassed all others in architectural knowledge. In 1670 he finished his splendid work, so far as crowning the grand entrance with the famous cornices, each of a single stone fifty-two feet in length. They were taken from the quarries of Meudon, and were transported to the Louvre by means of carriages or machines, invented by Perrault—the want of such facilities for bringing up the materials required having added considerably to the difficulty of a speedy completion of the work.

Perrault was not only poorly remunerated for his labor—except that to him it was a labor of love—but he had the mortification of seeing the king's interest in its progress and completion gradually decline. From 1670 the sum annually set apart for fully carrying out the designs and projects of Perrault be-

came less every year, until, in 1680, it ceased altogether. The architect's plans, become useless, were then deposited in the private library of the Cabinet du roi, and the Louvre—once destined to represent in its vast extent, its grand architecture, magnificent interior decorations, and dazzling costliness of furniture, the power, the greatness, and the exalted state of the King of France—was abandoned to the rats and bats, and in a few years fell into a miserable condition of ruin. Any portion that then remained habitable was divided into small apartments, and given to poor artists, poets, or other needy persons for whom it pleased the ministers to provide a shelter. Mean stalls were built against the outside walls, and wretched little hovels set up in the *grand cour*. In this deplorable state the magnificent palace of the Louvre, on which so much labor, skill, and money had been lavished, remained, till Louis XV., to save it from the irremediable decay it was fast falling into, ordered it to be repaired and restored where most urgently needed. Something further was done under Louis XVI.; but Napoleon I., in 1803, commissioned the architects MM. Perrier and Fontaine to put the edifice into thorough repair, to restore the sculptures, and to finish some of the uncompleted designs of Perrault—a work which occupied them uninterruptedly for the space of nine years.

Louis, who transferred his favor from château to château as he did from mistress to mistress, forsook the Louvre for that "*favori sans mérite*," Versailles. In 1666, the works under Perrault being in full operation, the king went to St. Germain, pending, as was supposed, the building of the fourth *façade* and the

completion of the alterations and additions at Versailles, which were carried on simultaneously with the works at Paris. But Louis disliked both his capital and the mutinous Parisians. As a resident, he returned to them no more, and his temporary visits were few and far between.

St. Simon (who is often very unjust) has said, and many have repeated it after him, that Louis XIV. "did nothing for Paris, either ornamental or useful, except building the Pont Royal, and that only from necessity." But within five years after the death of Mazarin, he did that which contributed towards the convenience of the Parisians, and the healthfulness and embellishment of Paris, more than all that his predecessors had done, since it had been a fortified city—"he threw down the walls thereof." (He did so little worth notice, that it is not right to deny him the merit of that little.) Those walls, something more than thirty years before, his father had rebuilt and added to, on enclosing a tract of ground north of the Seine. With their removal light and air were admitted, a pleasant promenade of boulevards, planted with trees, surrounded the city in the place of its gloomy old walls, moats, towers, and bastions. The city gates were rebuilt in the form of triumphal arches.

The Hôtel des Invalides is also due to Louis XIV. Its foundations were already laid in 1663; and the building was finished in 1675. Jules Hardouin Mansard, the nephew of François, was the architect of the beautiful chapel of that noble institution, as he was of that of Versailles and other works connected with the palace. The Royal Observatory was also erected by the king's order, and, besides these mate-

rial improvements in the city, several learned and scientific societies were founded.

Some members of the Académie Française united in 1663 to form a second academy; afterwards established by letters patent as the Académie des Belles-Lettres. The object of its founders was to hand down to posterity, by means of medals, commemorative of great events, and ranged in chronological order, a knowledge of the chief incidents of the reign of Louis XIV., and especially those in which the king, personally, was concerned, or the glory of them attributed to him. As the members of the society increased in number, they occupied themselves less in glorifying the actions of the king than with critical research into history; in order to test the truth of much that had been transmitted from remote periods, as historical fact, but which, when the grounds it rested upon were examined into, proved to be but mere fable. For recording the discoveries, experiments, inventions, and criticisms of this and other learned bodies, the *Journal des Savants*—the first publication of the kind—was established in 1665.

In the following year, Colbert's suggestion, supported by several learned mathematicians, that it was advisable to found in Paris an Académie des Sciences, was approved by the king. The idea was derived from the meetings of those scientific men, who became the first members of the Royal Society of London. Some of its academicians were despatched by the king to Cayenne and other parts of the world to make astronomical observations, which led to the discovery, afterwards confirmed by Newton, of the flattened conformation of the earth at the

poles. Several other societies, or academies, were founded in the early years of Louis' reign, after Mazarin's death—such as the schools of architecture and sculpture ; the Royal Academy of Music ; that of painting, with its branch academy at Rome—where, at the king's expense, young students, who had obtained prizes for the merit of their productions at the Academy in Paris, were lodged and supported, while studying the works of the great Italian masters. If the king did not originate these societies—though it is probable that he was made to believe that he did—at least he approved and established them by his grant of royal letters patent.

For some time after the reins of government were delivered into the hands of Louis XIV., he followed, under the guidance of Colbert and Lyonne—notwithstanding his resolve to be guided by no minister—the prevailing tone of the age, he did not lead it ; and France, though then resigned to the yoke of despotism, was yet disposed for progress. If, therefore, at this time progress was made, and the arts and sciences, hitherto much neglected, began to flourish, the impulse came from the intelligence of the nation, not from its king. The arts, *les belles lettres*, taste, manners, religion, received not their impress from him until a later date ; but his influence on them was then supreme.

CHAPTER XL.

Madame de Sévigné's Letters to M. de Pomponne.—Fouquet's Casket of Billets-doux.—The Letters from Sévigné.—Her Appeal to her Friends.—Devotion in Friendship.—Mazarin's Peculations.—Colbert's Hatred of Fouquet.—Sévigné's Deep Emotion.—Pélisson's Pleadings.—Eloquence and Pathos.—Fouquet's Sentence.—Perpetual Imprisonment.—The Fortress of Pignerol.—The North and the South.—Woman's Privilege.

AMONGST the numerous letters written by, or attributed to Madame de Sévigné, none possess greater interest than those of November and December, 1664, addressed to M. de Pomponne, during the trial of Nicolas Fouquet, Marquis de Belle Isle. Colbert, who sought with the avidity of jealous hate for proof, or anything that could be construed into proof, however small, if it would help to substantiate the charge of embezzling the finances of the state, and bring the accused to the scaffold, had caused not only the papers at Vaux and at his house at St. Mandé to be seized, but also those of several of his intimate friends. A casket confided to the care of Madame du Plessis-Bellièvre fell into his hands. The Chancellor, Le Tellier, and the king examined it together ; but found, instead of the documents they were in search of, a number of letters from the marquis's wide circle of fair correspondents. So tenderly had some of these ladies expressed themselves, that the virtuous indignation of the king, naturally, was roused by it. It seemed to him a further infringement of his sovereign rights ; for many of the

brightest *belles* of his court had contributed to Fouquet's collection of *billets-doux*. And apparently they were more solicitous to obtain his favor than he to win their smiles ; which may have been owing to the lavish profusion with which the magnificent *surintendant* was accustomed to make presents of pearls and diamonds, and, at times, to lend money to *les grandes dames* who had got into difficulties by playing at *hoca*—the fashionable game, at which many of the nobility lost their estates and often entirely ruined themselves.

To rouse the indignation of the public, whose feeling inclined more towards the *surintendant* than towards his accusers, the numerous base intrigues these letters suggested rather than proved were allowed, to a certain extent, to become generally known. Society must have been dreadfully scandalized at such a revelation, considering how pure its own morals were. In Fouquet's casket of *lettres galantes* were found several lively epistles from the Marquise de Sévigné. Although Le Tellier himself informed her cousin, Count de Bussy-Rabutin, that both he and the king had regarded them merely as the letters of "*une amie très spirituelle*"—Fouquet alone being to blame for having "*mal à propos mêlé l'amour avec l'amitié*"—yet the name of Madame de Sévigné, in connection with that of the unfortunate state prisoner, began to be bandied about the city, according to the custom of the time, in jests and songs, more malignant and offensive than witty.*

* Le Comte de Bussy-Rabutin was himself committed to the Bastille in the course of the following year, and detained there eighteen months. His book "*Les Amours des Gaules*," which had given extreme offence to the persons satirized in it, and

The marquise appealed to Ménage and Chapelain ; men of repute and influence, the friends of her youth, who had had a large part in her education, and now did their best to silence those malicious reports against a woman of unsullied reputation. She was annoyed that Fouquet should have placed her letters "*dans la casette de ses poulets,*" but rejoiced on having "*jamais voulu rien chercher ni trouver dans sa bourse.*" She was, therefore, the better able to prove herself the steadfast friend she was to him in misfortune.

"When in Brittany, Madame de Sévigné had been a frequent participator in the pleasures of the brilliant *réunions* at that palace of *les beaux arts et les belles lettres*, le Château de Vaux. Fouquet, like Turenne and the Prince de Conti, had been of the number of her admirers when, in years gone by, she had reappeared in the *beau monde* as a young widow. Bussy confesses that he, too, sought to find more favor in her eyes than his relationship merely entitled him to look for ; also "*qu'elle trouvait moyen de les éconduire tous, en badinant.*" It appears, however, that with the fascinating marquis, something more than a jest was needed to dismiss him. He was persevering in his attentions, and many precautions were necessary in order to escape from them. At last, she says, he

amongst whom he did not scruple to put Madame de Sévigné, was the pretext. His satirical song, or hymn, "*Alleluia,*" in which he very audaciously—considering the servile adulation then in vogue—alluded to the amours of "*Déodatus*"—Dieudonné being the epithet applied to Louis XIV. at his birth—was the real cause of his incarceration. "*Les Amours des Gaules,*" however, was published without his knowledge by the Marquise de la Baume, to whom he had confided the MS., and who sent it to Holland to be printed.

became weary of continuing what seemed so useless a pursuit, "*et, faute de mieux*, was content to accept the friendship she offered him."

Napoleon I., after reading her letters to M. de Pomponne during the trial of Fouquet, remarked that "*l'intérêt de Madame de Sévigné était bien chaud, bien vif, bien tendre, pour de la simple amitié.*" It was one of those friendships that woman does occasionally feel for man—deep, true, devoted, and unselfish, and far more enduring than love.

With what anguish of mind she followed, day by day, the proceedings of the mock tribunal, or "*bureau de commission !*" It was composed of twenty-two persons—judges, members of the council of state, and of the parliament—some of whom raved, raged, and insulted their prisoner when they perceived that his explanations, his quiet dignity, and forcible eloquence when allowed to speak, were making a favorable impression, alike on those who were present to condemn him, and those who attended merely to hear his defence. When questioned on the subject of his immense expenditure, he asserted, and desired to be allowed to prove, that the reckless extravagance he was charged with having indulged in at the expense of the state, was quite within what his own means permitted. But all papers were withheld from him ; they had been thoroughly examined by his enemies—the king, Colbert, and his clique—and only those that told against him were produced.

All that could be done—and his most sanguine friends hoped to do no more than save his life—to prevail on the king to be merciful, to propitiate the judges, to bribe those who were willing to take bribes—and few were found in those days to refuse

them—was for three years unremittingly and unswervingly persisted in.

Certain branches of the revenue had been wholly appropriated by Mazarin. He had drawn enormous sums yearly for secret expenses, exacted commission on all stores provided for the equipment of the army, and otherwise pilfered in every department of the government. He was accustomed to buy for a trifle any quantity of old discredited government bills ("*vieux billets décriés*"), as if to withdraw them from the hands of the public, but in reality to present them to the *surintendant des finances* for payment in full. For these and other depredations of the all-powerful cardinal on the finances of the state, Fouquet was arraigned. Having allowed them made him, in some degree, a participator in the cardinal's crime. But whether he could or could not say anything in self-justification mattered not at all; for Colbert hated him, the king hated him, and, whatever the convictions of his judges, acquittal was impossible. Yet all France was waiting in trembling, breathless expectation for his sentence.

The prisoner himself was more calm, resigned, cheerful, and self-possessed than any of his friends. Madame de Sévigné was persuaded to accompany some ladies to a house looking directly into the court of the arsenal, across which Fouquet had to pass from the council chamber after having been interrogated. She went masked, not desiring that her "*pauvre ami*" should recognize her. M. d'Artagnan (who had charge of him) was beside him, and at twenty or thirty paces distant, a guard of fifty *mousquetaires* followed. He had a very pensive air. "As for me," she says, "when I first perceived him, my

limbs trembled, and my heart beat so violently that I could scarcely support myself. As he approached, and was about to enter his den (*trou*), M. d'Artagnan directed his attention to us. He immediately looked up, and, with that pleasant, smiling expression you know so well, saluted us. I do not think he recognized me ; but I confess that I was strangely affected when I saw him pass through that low, narrow doorway." The only hope of Madame de Sévigné was in the ability, impartiality, and integrity of M. d'Ormesson, the chief "*rapporteur*" in the case, and on whom it first devolved to recapitulate and comment on the evidence, and to give his own vote, either for life or death. It was supposed that the recapitulation would occupy him not less than a week. "*Entre-ci et là,*" she exclaims, "*ce n'est pas vivre ; je ne crois pas que je puisse aller jusque-là.*"

Quite as much interested for Péliisson, and scarcely less so for Fouquet, was Mademoiselle de Scudéry. After two years of constant endeavor, she obtained from Colbert permission for Madame Péliisson to see her son. The like small favor all her efforts failed to secure for Fouquet. Referring afterwards to this celebrated state trial, she says that she had burnt more than five hundred letters on the subject, and that she herself had written a larger number while the prisoners were in the Bastille. To her, the family of the marquis, and many of his friends, resorted for comfort. Madame de Sévigné often refers to her. "*Sapho, dont l'esprit et la pénétration n'ont point de bornes,*" consoled her.

Péliisson, the secretary, who was of less importance than the wealthy and fascinating *surintendant*, but for his fidelity to him would have been released. He was

four years and a half in the Bastille, and had the courage to publish three discourses or pleadings addressed to the king in defence of his chief.

These discourses have been pronounced models of judiciary eloquence, unequalled in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Yet they were not the productions of a lawyer, the pleadings of a barrister, or even judicial memoirs. They were inspired by the courage of true friendship for one who, from a high and influential position, had fallen into misfortune, and display great oratorical talent, animated by zeal to avert the danger threatening the accused. Voltaire compared them to the pleadings of Cicero. And, according to the opinion of La Harpe, when this testimony to their excellence was given, there existed nothing at all approaching them in eloquence in modern writings of the kind, or that, beside them, could be put in comparison with the discourses of the ancient orators. He admires the style, the noble sentiments and ideas, the close connection of the proofs adduced, and their lucid explanation ; the force of the reasonings, and the art with which a vein of subdued satire running through them is used to strengthen the orator's arguments. With much skill and address, it is made to appear that the king's glory is interested in absolving the accused. Many other beauties are noticed—the sublimity of the thoughts, and the extreme pathos of the peroration especially addressed to the king.

But Pélisson expended his rhetoric in vain on so ignorant and selfish a despot. It was like casting pearls before swine. La Fontaine pleaded also for his friend Fouquet in a poetical address, and many others employed their pens zealously in the work of

intercession with more or less force and feeling. The king's only remark on this demonstration in favor of Fouquet was, "*Le Marquis de Belle Isle est un homme dangereux.*" It inflamed, too, the hatred of Colbert and his party ; and the sentence of the commission, severe as it was, as it fell short of death, enraged them still more. "Banishment and confiscation," said M. d'Ormesson. "A gibbet and a rope are his due," said Pussort, Colbert's uncle ; "but as he is of a distinguished family, let him lose his head." A majority of three confirmed Ormesson's sentence.

"*Louez Dieu ! notre pauvre ami est sauvé !*" exclaimed Madame de Sévigné, as she despatched her courier, who, during the trial, was constantly on the road between Paris and Livry with the latest intelligence for M. de Pomponne, almost as much interested as herself in the result. But a disappointment still awaited her. There was a chance, she believed, of bidding adieu to her friend before leaving his country. Some even thought that a pardon would come from the king at the last moment. The poor little queen had been entreated by the Countess de Vaux, Fouquet's mother, to intercede for her son, and great hopes were built upon it. For she had earned the profound gratitude of Maria Theresa, whom she found suffering intensely from a fit of the vapors, by sending her a plaster which had so effectually cured her, that it was looked upon almost as a miracle, and Madame Fouquet as a saint. Madame de Sévigné was, however, less sanguine. "*Je connais trop,*" she remarked, "*des tendresses de ce pays là.*" Yet she was inclined to draw comfort from the length of the tail of a comet that was visible at that time, and that was

generally believed to have had great influence on the trial, both for good and for evil, as wishes or opinions on the subject varied.

The rage of Colbert was so excessive at his victim's escape from the scaffold, and the probability of his finding, in spite of the confiscation of the whole of his property, an honorable asylum in some other country, that "something atrocious was looked for." The king, too, was extremely disappointed. Even he could scarcely venture to pass sentence of death upon one whom a majority of the persons appointed by himself to try the accused had spared. He therefore disposed of the difficulty by striking out "banishment," and writing in its place "perpetual imprisonment." The wife was refused permission to share her husband's prison, and was banished, with his mother and other near relatives, to distant parts of France.

Poor Madame de Sévigné ! She had to moderate her transports ; but she was not one of those who grieve long—" *son sourire était bien près de ses larmes.*" "What she would have become, she knew not," she said ; "whether she could have survived, she doubted, had Fouquet been condemned to death." But his life is spared, " *qui est une grande affaire ;*" banishment is changed to imprisonment, " *qui est une grande rigueur.* *Mais ayons du courage ; il faut mettre sa confiance en Dieu et laisser notre pauvre cher ami sous sa protection.*" Fouquet was imprisoned in the fortress of Pignerol, a guard of fifty soldiers placed over him, and generally he was treated with much severity. While on his journey there arose a report that he had been taken ill ; immediately there was an outcry—" *Déjà ! déjà !*" It, however, proved to be a false rumor, originating

in the general belief that, although Fouquet had escaped the scaffold, poison awaited him in his dungeon at Pignerol. He is supposed to have died there in 1680 ; but it has been asserted by Gourville and others, that he left it shortly before his death. His grandson, the Marquis de Belle Isle, was a distinguished general in the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV. He was that Maréchal de France who had the conduct of the war against the empress-queen, Maria Theresa, in the reign of Louis XV.

The office of *surintendant des finances* was abolished, or rather the holder of it was styled *contrôleur-général et secrétaire d'état*, instead of *surintendant*, and the subordinate posts of *contrôleurs*, which existed under the *surintendant*, were done away with. All who had been employed under Fouquet were dismissed, and subjected either to a part confiscation of their property, heavy fines, or a term of imprisonment, and the grand Colbert reigned. In the correspondence of Madame de Sévigné and M. de Pomponne he is called "*Petit*," with reference to the baseness of his conduct towards Fouquet. With equal truth, too, she called him "the North," and the man he so hated "the South ;" and no doubt they were in character "far as the poles asunder." Colbert, austere, hard, cold, prudent, scrupulous, severe, a great financier and stern man of business ; Fouquet, genial in disposition, generous, *spirituel*, a lover and patron of *les belles lettres* and *les beaux arts* ; full of grace and politeness, and a true kindliness of heart that won for him the sincere affection of a host of friends, as well as the esteem of the people amongst whom he lived.

Colbert, no doubt, had great and manifold merits,

and justly to record them may safely be left to the impartial pen of the grave historian. The pen of woman (not always strictly impartial, being often under the uncontrolled guidance of feeling) finds a more congenial theme in extolling the less rugged virtues, the gentler and more engaging qualities, that distinguished the unfortunate victim of envy and malice—the brilliant and fascinating Nicolas Fouquet, Marquis de Belle Isle.

“*Les femmes,*” as Madame de Sévigné truly says, “*ont permission d’être faibles, et elles se servent sans scrupule de ce privilège.*”

CHAPTER XLI.

The Salons Nevers and Mazarin.—St. Evremond's Letter.—St. Evremond Escapes.—A Welcome in England.—The Hôtel de Nevers.—Madame Des Houlières.—Poems of Madame Des Houlières.—Her Rescue from Prison.—Satirical Sonnet on "Phèdre."—A Duel seems Inevitable.—Rachel, as Phèdre.—The Brothers Corneille.—First Plays of Racine.—Like Coffee, find no Favor.—"Le Misanthrope."—"Les Femmes Savantes."—Théâtre du Palais Royal, 1666.—Molière in Ninon's Salon.—"Tartuffoli ! Signor Nuncio."

THE Hôtels Nevers and Mazarin reopened their *salons* with great *éclat* after Fouquet was safely lodged in the fortress of Pignerol. Fears had been entertained that the disclosures at his trial might rouse popular indignation against the cardinal's heirs, and perhaps to such a height that to suppress it, it would be necessary to order restitution to be made to the coffers of the state of some portion of the spoil with which Mazarin had enriched himself and his Italian peasant family. Profligacy, under the name of "*Mœurs Italiennes*," reigned in those splendid *salons*, in those of the Hôtel de Bouillon and of the Countess de Soissons, at the Louvre, and wherever a member of that group of Sicilians presided. *Les bienséances*, as understood at the court of Louis XIV., were allowed a very wide field to range in ; but the Italians, in their love of freedom, allowed them or themselves greater latitude still.

One brilliant member of their circle was, however, permanently lost to them—the witty epicurean, phi-

losopher, St. Evremond, who had been a constant frequenter of the Hôtel Mazarin, as well as of the *spirituel*, if rather lax, society that assembled at Ninon's. While examining the private papers of Fouquet—in which the king took great delight, from a petty curiosity he had acquired when frequenting the idle and gossiping *coterie* of his mother and her ladies—Louis met with a letter, or the copy of one, from St. Evremond to the Duc de Créquy, giving an amusing and satirical account of the cardinal's conduct of the Treaty of the Pyrenees, and of the questions of precedence and etiquette which retarded its completion. It was a mere *jeu d'esprit*, but Louis had resolved to put down such presumptuous scribblers, and St. Evremond was only saved from joining Bussy-Rabutin in the Bastille by a hint he received from a friend of the lodging then in preparation for him. He fled to Holland, thence to England, where, in the congenial atmosphere of Charles's libertine court, he found an asylum and a cordial welcome. De Grammont and other friends endeavored, from time to time, to induce the king to pardon an offence which, it was believed, the cardinal himself would scarcely have resented. But Louis chose to regard it as an act of treachery towards a minister, in whose service and confidence he was at the time it was written.

Thirty years after St. Evremond received permission to return to France. He declined to avail himself of it. A new generation, he said, had sprung up since he left, and he would be "leaving old and sincere friends, accustomed to his wen, to go amongst strangers. For but two or three of the friends of former days were still living, and they—with the exception of

De Grammont—would no longer find in his face any resemblance to the one they had before been familiar with.” His friend Ninon, too, persuaded in vain. His correspondence with her had been constant, and it continued till his death. She kept him *au courant* of all that was going on at the court ; gave him the gossip of Parisian society, and any other information she thought likely to interest or amuse him. Some of her letters are bright and lively, in others she is, at times, too much disposed to philosophize. But like French women generally, of any education, she wielded a very *facile* pen. He was accustomed to recommend his friends to her when visiting Paris—often ladies of distinction ; amongst others Lady Sandwich, the daughter of Rochester, who is said to have very greatly admired and esteemed her.*

But if St. Evremond was absent, there was no lack of philosophers of the same school to take his place, or, indeed, of the *beau monde* generally to fill the *salons* whose society was thought so corrupt, that even the court frowned upon it. This, however, was in the latter days of the queen-mother, whose piety increased as she drew nearer to her end. She was then sincerely grieved, and much troubled in mind, at the immoralities of the king, though she had so largely contributed to make him what he was—suppressing the good in his character, and fostering the evil.

The Hôtel de Nevers made greater pretensions to literary distinction than the Hôtel Mazarin. The duke himself wrote verses ; his most admired ones

* St. Evremond died in 1703, at the age of ninety, three years before Mademoiselle de Lenclos, who attained the same age. He was honored with a grave in Westminster Abbey.

were on the work of the Abbé Rancé, of La Trappe celebrity, in refutation of Fénelon's "Maximes des Saints." At the Hôtel de Nevers the idyls and pastorals of Madame Des Houlières—afterwards so greatly renowned—were first read, and the verses of the youthful Mademoiselle Chéron ; still more distinguished for her musical talent and for her success as an artist. She was a pupil of Le Brun, and through his recommendation was elected a member of the Academy of Painting. Several large historical pictures, and some portraits of her contemporaries—that of Archbishop Péréfixe, who wrote the life of Henry IV., and the only portrait known to exist of Madame Des Houlières—were painted by her.

These and other celebrities, including Molière, and Madame de la Sablière—who had not yet entirely withdrawn from the world—together with La Fontaine, who followed wherever Madame de la Sablière led, gave a certain literary *éclat* to the Hôtel de Nevers. Of the poetesses of her day, Madame Des Houlières is now the best known ; though by name, probably even in France, more than through her works, with the exception of certain sentences and short passages that have passed into proverbs. She wrote songs, epigrams, sonnets, odes, idyls, and even tragedies. In tragedy she was less successful than in her graceful pastorals, on which her fame rests. Her heroic personages discourse far less naturally than her shepherds and shepherdesses. But charming Phyllis and Strephon, and their bleating young lambs, are gone out of fashion in poetry, though still much sought after in porcelaine. Their simple occupations, and the *naïveté* of their prattlings on friendship and love, are not to the taste of this so-

phisticated age. It is wonderful, indeed, that "*ces rêveries d'un cœur tendre et sensible*" should have met with so enthusiastic a reception from the dissolute society for whom they were written.

Madame Des Houlières had many imitators, but none who approached her either in the harmony of her flowing verse, or the tenderness and beauty of her thoughts. She had the true poetic faculty ; a rare gift in that verse-writing age, and possessed almost exclusively by herself and the two or three great dramatic poets of France. A book of proverbs in verse might be compiled from her poems. For instance, the following lines on one of the most prevalent vices of the *beau monde* of the period—gambling :

" Les plaisirs sont amers, sitôt qu'on en abuse ;
Il est bon de jouer un peu,
Mais il faut seulement que le jeu nous amuse.
Un joueur, d'un commun aveu,
N'a rien humain que l'apparence,
Et d'ailleurs il n'est pas si facile qu'on pense,
D'être fort honnête homme et de jouer gros jeu ;
Le désir de gagner, qui nuit et jour l'occupe,
Est un dangereux aiguillon,
Souvent, quoique l'esprit, quoique le cœur soit bon.
On commence par être dupe,
On finit par être fripon."

And again :

" L'amour-propre est, hélas ! le plus sot des amours ;
Cependant des erreurs il est la plus commune.
Quelque puissant qu'on soit richesse, en credit,
Quelque mauvais succès qu'ait tout ce qu'on écrit.
Nul n'est content de sa fortune,
Ni mécontent de son esprit."

Madame Des Houlières wrote in Spanish and Ital-

ian with as much facility as in French. She was beautiful, too. The Great Condé, who was not remarkable for his devotion to the fair sex, had sighed at her feet, and sighed in vain. M. Des Houlières and Mademoiselle du Ligier were then one of the few couples who had married for love. She was seventeen when in 1651 their marriage took place. Her husband, attached to the Grand Condé, took part in his rebellion, and in his absence his young wife was seized and conveyed to one of the prisons of state. As soon as he was informed of it, he left the rebel camp, and, by means of bribes, entered the fortress disguised as a Royalist soldier, and, in a similar disguise, carried off his wife. They both shared the exile of Condé, and returned to France with him when the amnesty, as stipulated by the Treaty of the Pyrenees, was granted in 1660.

With his pardon, some post in the government was also bestowed on M. Des Houlières, and the poetess—then twenty-seven—by her beauty and her genius (she was called the tenth muse, soon shone as a bright star in literary and fashionable society. Some years after, she was accused of endeavoring to bring ridicule on Racine's grand tragedy of "*Phèdre*," by a satirical sonnet, written after witnessing its first representation. "Is it not enough," says Voltaire, in reference to this sonnet, "that women should show jealousy in love; must their jealousy extend even to the *belles lettres*?" It was made to appear that it was the actress who played Aricie, and who was enormously stout, for whom the satire was really intended. The sonnet, however, was near causing a duel. It was printed and distributed in the *salons*, but its author's name was withheld. As Nevers

frequently exercised his brilliant pen in scribbling sonnets, the authorship of this one was immediately assigned to him, and the more readily as he had had the folly to extol the mediocre productions of Pradon, and to set them above the tragedies of Racine. A few days after another sonnet appeared, parodying the first, and very pointedly ridiculing the duke's poetical effusions. This—again erroneously—was attributed to Racine and his friend Boileau, and although it was repudiated by them, Nevers, stung to the quick by the irritating nature of the satire, publicly declared that he “would have those two poets soundly flogged.”

This coming to the ears of Monsieur le Duc—the son of the Grand Condé—a great patron of letters, and the friend of Racine and Boileau, he declared himself their protector, and informed the Duc de Nevers that any insults offered to them he should look upon as offered to himself. And further, until the sonneteers should explain and apologize, or the affair be settled by a hostile meeting, Monsieur le Duc announced that he had invited the poets to take up their residence in his palace. The court, as well as all the *salons* of Paris, was occupied in discussing the mystery of the authorship of the sonnets. Various poets were named, but no satisfactory conclusion was arrived at. The mystery gave piquancy to the quarrel, and made it even more exciting than when society was divided into two hostile camps, and disputes ran high on the respective merits of the sonnets of Bensérade and Voiture.

The two dukes, meanwhile, had so undisguisedly expressed feelings of mutual contempt, that a duel was looked upon as inevitable, and Madame Des

Houlières, alarmed at the threatening aspect the affair had assumed, resolved to declare herself the original offender. Immediately Monsieur le Duc removed his hand from the hilt of the sword which he had been about to draw. But the Duc de Nevers vowed that his sword should not rest in its scabbard, when, following the example set by the lady, a party of young men, amongst whom were the Comte de Fiesque and the Chevalier de Nantouillet, confessed themselves the avengers of Racine ; also, that one and all, with either pistols or swords, were ready to give satisfaction to the Duc de Nevers if he felt the retort unprovoked and himself aggrieved. The duke, who thought, as his uncle had often thought before him, that "discretion was the better part of valor," declared himself far less aggrieved than amused.

Society laughed and clapped its hands when the farce was ended, and "Damon," as the sonneteers called the duke, retired to "*son palais doré faire des vers où jamais personne n'entend rien.*" The only person to whom the *mauvaise plaisanterie* of Madame Des Houlières did any real harm was the "grosse Aricie," who excited so much laughter when she made her appearance that she felt compelled to give up the part. The scene with Phèdre probably gained in effect when a less portly person assumed the character. But who that ever saw the gifted Rachel in her tragic grandeur, as Phèdre remarked whether her *confidente* Aricie was fat or thin ? Yet La Champmeslé, who first played the part of Phèdre, was a very great actress. There were many, however, who, while admiring her talent, like Madame de Sévigné, failed to appreciate the genius of Racine, and many more who, from jealousy, were

unwilling to recognize it. In the opinion of most persons, Madame des Houlières was of the number of the latter.

The coterie of poets that, in 1664, assembled twice or thrice weekly at the house of Boileau Despréaux, included Pierre Corneille and his brother Thomas, who was nineteen years his junior, and in some sort both the pupil and the rival of the elder dramatist. He wrote thirty-four plays, being one in excess of the number written by his brother. But genius inspired Pierre, and the success of Pierre inspired Thomas. Yet many sublime passages may be found in his works; his tragedy of "Ariane" is considered his masterpiece—the subject being pathetic, the sentiments noble and often eloquently expressed. The fame of Pierre Corneille—the Peter the Great of French tragedy—rests chiefly, as is known, on his earlier works—"Le Cid," "Cinna," "Les Horaces," "Polyeucte," and detached scenes in "Radogune," "Pompée," etc. Some critics have adjudged the palm of excellence to "Les Horaces," as far as the first three acts—what follows forming almost a distinct play, destroying the interest of the first. Of all his tragedies it is the one most entirely the creation of his own genius, and in which its grandeur and sublimity are most strikingly apparent—there being little that is dramatic in the subject itself.

Molière was one of Boileau's society of poets, also young Racine—"L'immortel Jean," as Voltaire calls him—who sat at the feet of the elder dramatists, seeking approbation and encouragement, which Boileau, alone, had the discernment and disinterestedness heartily to give him. His first tragedy—"Théogène"—he gave to Molière, who furnished

him with the subject of his second attempt—"Les Frères ennemis." But neither had any marked success. His third—"Alexandre"—Corneille thought so ill of that he earnestly advised him to write no more. Chapelain corrected those first efforts of Racine—Chapelain, who had so signally failed as a poet himself, was an excellent critic. But "Alexandre," like its predecessors, excited little interest. Then came "Andromaque," and though envy and prejudice did their best to decry, and to put down, this rising genius, it was felt that, in depicting the passions, a greater than Corneille had arisen. It is possible that the later plays of Corneille may owe something of their extreme inferiority to his earlier ones, to a feeling of discouragement, arising from a consciousness of the superiority of his rival, rather than from any premature decay of his powers. Yet the public voice continued in his favor; and, as if fearing that the great reputation of the "father of French dramatic poetry" was imperilled by the success of the younger dramatist, refused to confirm the judgment of the few who were found to appreciate the merits of Racine. Even when increased favor was accorded to his plays, a large part of society declared that it would prove to be a mere passing caprice. Coffee, it appears, was introduced to the notice of the *beau monde* of Paris at about the same time as were Racine's tragedies, and found as much difficulty as the poet in securing its suffrage. Of both it was pronounced, "*qu'ils n'iroient pas loin*;" yet by the force of their respective merits both permanently established themselves in the estimation of all classes.

The best plays of Molière were the least well received by the public. "Le Misanthrope" was played

but four times. It was not generally understood. It was intended—as has been asserted—to read a lesson to the Duc de Montausier, who never scrupled to tell the king his mind, whether likely to prove agreeable to his godship or not. He attended its first representation, and was to learn from it that a little suavity of manner was not incompatible with great wisdom and rigid virtue. Molière put into the mouth of the Misanthrope many expressions which the duke was accustomed to use, and referred also to many of his known peculiarities, in order to make the picture more striking. But after witnessing it, though he knew from unmistakable hints that had been given him that in the Misanthrope he was the person aimed at, he pronounced it “by no means offensive, and a very good play.” So it is evident the duke did not see himself as others, or at least as Molière, saw him, or if he did that he liked the picture.

The same cold reception was given to “*Les Femmes savantes*.” The subject was a dreary one, and five acts on so sterile a theme as a pretension to learning and *esprit* (exhausted already in “*Les Précieuses ridicules*”) were considered more than human patience could bear. There was a prejudice against it before it was produced, and the merits of the piece failed to create a reaction in its favor. What is said in it on the subject of education is taken, almost word for word, from “*Le Grand Cyrus*” of Mademoiselle de Scudéry, written several years before. A small section of *les grandes dames* had become at that period less desirous to shine in the *salons* by their *esprit* and agreeable conversation, than to be distinguished in literary circles for the pro-

fundity of their learning. It was the fashion to acquire some knowledge of Greek and Latin, to be interested in scientific subjects, and deeply versed in the metaphysics of Descartes. Some ladies whom the gambling-table had compelled to many retrenchments, in order to retrieve their losses, solaced themselves by employing their leisure in the study of astronomy. This was a change for the better, no doubt ; but, often, confusing astronomy with astrology, it was studied with a view to searching into futurity rather than for a more enlightened acquaintance with the starry heavens.

The pursuits and studies of these learned ladies were regarded as a censure on the frivolous pastimes of the court. Molière, therefore, resolved to satirize and ridicule them.

" *Ce n'était pas,*" says Roederer, "*le spectacle de la société qu'inspirait la comédie 'Les Femmes savantes.'* Molière voulait attaquer pour plaire au roi une société qui, puissante dans l'opinion, gagnait tous les jours dans l'esprit du roi lui-même. Il était embarrassé et a manqué ici de son but." Molière gained more popularity with the people when he descended to low comedy, in such pieces as "Les Fourberies de Scapin," "M. de Pourceaugnac," etc. Only buffoonery, and vulgar jests, that raised loud laughter, pleased the groundlings ; and even his more refined audiences had scarcely sufficient culture, and perception of humor, to detect and appreciate the covert satire running through the dialogue in several of his best plays.

Yet the play must have been good, indeed, to have afforded a mixed audience much pleasure, with the *mise-en-scène* customary in the days of Molière. The *salle*, terribly cold unless well filled, was lighted only

by a few wretched tallow candles ; two candle-snuffers being constantly employed in preventing their dim, smoky glare from making the darkness more visible than the players. Six poor scraping fiddlers formed the orchestra—for the royal bands, of twelve and twenty-four, *en grande tenue*, were in requisition only when “ La troupe du roi,” as Molière’s company of players was now called, played before the king. A privileged part of the audience sat on the stage, which was encumbered with benches and chairs for the accommodation of those *grandeesh* ; whose frequent exits—for refreshment at the *buffets* in front of the theatre and at the entrances—usually distracting the attention at some interesting part of the play, were extremely confusing. Such were the arrangements when the Duc de Montausier witnessed the first representation of “ Le Misanthrope ” on May 30th, 1666. But considering how fanciful was the costume of the gay gallants who figured so prominently on the stage of that day, they may have given picturesqueness to the scene, when “ they stood about grouped in careless attitudes,” like supernumeraries of the modern stage, who represent the ancient barons, bold warriors, daring brigands, or happy villagers.

One can imagine that it must have been far more pleasing and satisfactory to hear Molière read his own plays ; as he frequently did to a brilliant and *spirituel* audience in Mademoiselle de Lenclos’ well-lighted *salon*—“ on the walls of which the history of Psyche was painted, in panels, the intervening spaces being filled with Venetian mirrors.”

Molière and Ninon and Madame de la Sablière are said to have consulted more than once together to

devise an appropriate title for the play afterwards named "Tartuffe." This title, as probably everybody knows, suggested itself to Molière (if the anecdote may be relied upon) when, one day, some affairs took him to the residence of the Nuncio. Two extremely devout-looking ecclesiastics, apparently wrapped in profound meditation, were in the apartment. A basket of truffles happened to be brought in as an offering to his Eminence, whose attention at the moment was engaged. One of the priests, however, saw the savory roots. His eyes gleamed with delight, and forgetting his *rôle* of devotee, he jumped up, exclaiming, "Tartuffoli ! Signor Nuncio, Tartuffoli !" Molière, ever observant, was struck by this sudden change from a severely pious air to a gloating one over a basket of truffles, and it occurred to him that Tartuffe would be a happy designation for his still unchristened impostor.

CHAPTER XLII.

Death of Anne of Austria.—Bossuet, Evêque de Condom.—Le Grand Monarque.—Louis' Preference for Versailles.—His Numerous Court.—The Satirist of the Fronde.—La Princesse d'Élide.—The Fêtes of 1667.—An Address to the Sun.—Versailles in its Glory.—A Grand Promenade.—The Sun and the Lesser Lights.—The Court and the Salons.—A Confidential Secretary.—L'Appartement du Roi.—Social Freedom.

THE sufferings of Anne of Austria* terminated in death in 1666. So great had been her influence over her son, that he never probably, until that event happened, felt himself wholly exempt from control. Much affection for his indolent, indulgent mother, and great delight in her society, he had from childhood constantly evinced ; and it was this filial disposition, the best trait in his character, that so long impelled him to show deference and respect towards the man she had taught him to reverence as a father. Her funeral oration was pronounced by Bossuet. It was his first and his least happy effort, in that branch of pulpit oratory in which he afterwards so greatly excelled. He was, however, rewarded with the bishopric of Condom, though the oration was not published, nor at that time had any of his sermons been printed.

After the queen-mother's funeral, the king left the Tuileries for the Château of St. Germain, which at one time seemed likely to become his favorite resi-

* She died of cancer.

dence. Versailles could not vie with it in beauty of situation, and its hanging gardens, which Sir Christopher Wren mentions with so much admiration, were picturesque as the grounds that surrounded it. But Versailles had the advantage, in Louis' opinion, of being at a greater distance from Paris, and more out of the way of any possible *émeute*. The people were disappointed that the king absented himself so continually from his capital. But the Fronde and the indignities of his minority were never forgotten by Louis XIV., and never forgiven ; and he now rejected Paris, as the Parisians in his boyish days had rejected him. His visits were always short, and for the purpose, most frequently, of humiliating the parliament and annulling the ancient privileges of that assembly ; in which the refractory spirit of the Fronde was not yet wholly extinguished.

Louis' fondness for walking, and for the chase, also led him to give preference to a residence where such habits and tastes could be more conveniently followed than in the city. Besides, should he too frequently be seen by the people, and his sacred person become a familiar object to the eyes of the vulgar, might they not fail to regard him with that reverential awe it was his aim to inspire in all classes of his subjects ? He exacted extraordinary homage from all who approached him ; and they who enjoyed that supreme felicity, found it to their interest to be so overpowered by the majesty of his presence, his grand air, and solemn pomposity, that, frequently, they feigned to be struck dumb, as it were, before him, or at best only able to address him with " bated breath and whispering humbleness." Had he spat

upon them, there were many among his favorites and flatterers so grovelling in spirit that they would have humbly thanked him for such courtesy. To the multitude he was as grand a mystery as the "veiled prophet;" they were dazzled by the magnificence and splendor, far surpassing the royal state of any of his predecessors, with which he surrounded himself and screened his vices from vulgar eyes.

The squabbles of Louis' bevy of mistresses, of whom La Vallière, created Duchess de Vaujour, was then "*Maîtresse en titre*," formed another reason for removing the court from Paris. He would not allow the brightness of his glory—and he was anxious to keep it resplendently bright—to be dimmed by such scandals going the round of the *salons*, and becoming the subjects of songs and epigrams, for the amusement of the populace and the licentious wits of the day. Even the vices of the sovereign must be invested with an air of solemnity and grandeur, and varnished over with a thick coating of stately politeness.

Versailles was fast growing into a small province, of which the palace was the capital; and the king's attachment to this vast, ill-designed edifice grew as the palace increased in size, as its gardens, lakes, and fountains increased in extent and number, and as the court was more numerously attended. Perrault continued working, *con amore*, at the grand entrance *façade* of the Louvre; but the new pavilion and some other proposed additions to the Tuileries were left incomplete, all hands being needed for Versailles. In 1664 the number of persons composing the court was above six hundred, exclusive of attendants, and the people employed in arranging the fancy

fêtes. These *fêtes* were intended so greatly to outvie in splendor the still-talked-of brilliant festivities of Vaux, that no comparison should be possible with them. They were given, as if in mockery of the misery of the starving people, at a time when both the capital and the provinces were suffering from one of those terrible visitations of famine and sickness, so frequent in the seventeenth century. In 1666 the court had so greatly increased, "ancient *frondeurs* having become *fins courtisans*," that Versailles had to accommodate, or in some way to shelter, nearly a thousand persons.

Towards those nobles, and their families, who had taken any part in fomenting the troubles of the Fronde in Paris, or the revolt in the provinces, Louis was implacable. Notwithstanding the amnesty, if they desired to be reinstated in his favor they must show it, very plainly, by the most humble submissiveness, and a readiness at all times to fall down and worship him, and to lick the dust from his feet. To have been the author of an epigram, or silly *jeu d'esprit*, that possibly had raised a laugh against the court, was, in his eyes, treason of no light kind. But so open was he to flattery—and no incense could be too strong for him—that the crime might be expiated by adulatory sonnets, heroic odes, or pastorals in which, alluding to the king and his *amours*, sentimental shepherds and shepherdesses described in inflated verse the godlike beauty of some sylvan Apollo, and the havoc he had made of the hearts of the languishing love-sick Daphnes and Chloes, who tended their flocks on the same hills.

Pensions, or "*gratifications*," were sure to fall into the lap of those poets, or other writers, who could

mockingly and wittily hold up to laughter and derision "*la vielle société de la Fronde*," or those traces of it that were supposed still to survive. Some French writers* have considered the plays of Molière, who, of all the poets of the time, was the most favored by Louis XIV., as one continuous satire on the period of the Fronde, and the pretensions of the Frondeurs. "*Tous ces marquis provinciaux, Rodomonts de castels, ne sont-ils pas l'amère critique de l'esprit provincial qui domina l'époque de la Fronde? Ces ridicules jetés sur les bourgeois qui veulent s'élever et s'occuper d'autre chose que de leur ménage; ces moqueries sur tout ce qui n'est pas le cour, n'est ce pas un service d'écrivain aux gages de la volonté et des intérêts de Louis XIV.?*" "*C'est la plume politique qui a le mieux compris la situation de la couronne; les ennemis qu'elle avait à combattre; les moqueries qu'elle avait à répandre et à semer.*"

Molière's allegorical play, "*La Princesse d'Élide*," and the farce of "*Le Mariage forcé*," were written for the *fêtes* of 1664; and the first three acts of "*Tartuffe*" were played that the king might give his opinion of the comedy before it was finished. Had it been condemnatory, it is probable that either the last two acts would not have been written, or the play not produced during Louis' reign. But the king not only gave no sign of disfavor, but the great honor of having the Grand Monarque for a godfather was conferred on the dramatist's child. Molière's unhappy marriage with Armande Grésinde Béjart took place in 1666.

The post of court fool still existed when Molière wrote "*La Princess d'Élide*," and whatever allu-

* Victor Cousin, J. B. Capefigue, Roederer, etc.

sions the play may have contained to other matters, this remaining appendage of royalty in the barbarous ages was delicately and skilfully ridiculed. It was made to appear an anomaly, in a court where strict etiquette and "*la grande politesse*" had taken the place of noisy mirth, coarse jesting, and rough manners. But the fool's occupation was not yet entirely gone. In many "great houses," for a fool to form part of the household was regarded as an evidence of ancient lineage; as the recently ennobled and the wealthy *haute bourgeoisie* did not encumber themselves with those miserable buffoons. The fool of Louis XIV. had belonged to the Grand Condé. The Count de Grammont said of him that, "of all the fools that had followed that prince, L'Angeli (the court fool) was the only one that had made his fortune by it."

The *fêtes* of 1667 lasted seven days. The king spent so recklessly on their preparation, that to provide funds for furnishing the necessary supplies for the war, which had been declared against Spain—ostensibly to enforce the rights renounced by Maria Theresa on her marriage, but, in reality, to afford the magnificent Louis an opportunity of presenting himself to the admiring eyes of Europe, as the centre of a grand military *spectacle*—greatly tried the financial ability of Colbert. Lulli's twenty-four and twelve violins were incessantly occupied in the *ballets mythologiques, allégoriques, féeriques*, etc., danced by the king, queen, Madame, Mademoiselle, and Monsieur, and their respective courts. Queen Henriette left her charming retreat at Ste. Madeleine de Chailot to witness their performance, and was seated on a dais with *grandes dames et seigneurs* grouped artis-

tically around her. Bensérade wrote the verses which, between the dances, were recited by Molière's troupe. In one of these mythological *ballets* the king represented the sun. Bensérade's address to that luminary was as follows :

“ Je doute qu'on le prenne avec vous sur le ton
De Daphné ni de Phaéton ;
Lui trop ambitieux, elle trop inhumaine ;
Il n'est pas là de piège où vous puissiez donner,
Le moyen de s'imaginer
Qu'une femme vous fuie, et qu'un homme vous mene ? ”

It was not only on festive occasions that Versailles wore an air of grand gala ; it was its habitual aspect. The gardens were already “ fabulously grand.” At Vaux nature had contributed, quite as much as art, to the marvellous beauty of the scene, that excited so much angry jealousy in the king. At Versailles she had done nothing ; and Louis' pleasure was the greater, for he imagined it to be the unrivalled creation of his own genius. Immense waste of treasure, reckless sacrifice of human life, the skill of engineers, and the artistic taste of Le Notre (all to be repeated, and in a few years exaggerated, at Marly), had, indeed, transformed a barren sand-heath into a flourishing garden. Under the able direction of La Quintinie, groves, shrubberies, and shady avenues were, with much care and labor, transplanted from the woods of Compiègne and Fontainebleau ; and though large numbers of them languished and died in the unfavorable soil of their new habitation their places were immediately refilled from the same store-houses of nature. Versailles, with its palace, its gardens, its statues, and waterworks, Trianon and

appendages, was a work of art to gaze upon with wonder—"to admire and flee from."

Yet, on a bright spring day, or soft summer evening, when Louis, disposed for one of those long promenades he was accustomed to take, often twice in the day, descended to the gardens from the grand entrance of the palace, followed by his numerous court, the *coup d'œil*, from a distance, must have been charmingly effective. The gardens were admirably adapted for such a display; it may have been a little theatrical—something like a "*grand tableau*" in a fairy extravaganza—yet very attractive. For a solitary ramble, or a stroll with two or three companions, those broad paths were repelling, and their formal grandeur depressing. No lover of the beauties of nature would have cared to wander through them. But when enlivened by sauntering, chatting, flirting, laughing groups of picturesquely and richly dressed ladies and gentlemen of the court—a numerous retinue of lackeys following, no less resplendent in dress than their masters—the admirable fitness of the gardens and grounds of Versailles for the purpose which Louis, no doubt, had in his mind when the designs were approved, must have been very striking.

In the centre of this throng of feathers and swords, satins and laces, flashing jewels, fans and masks, solemnly paced the magnificent Louis, with the air of lord of the universe; monarch of all he surveyed, and of all who surveyed him—for his courtiers lived only in the light of his countenance. What says La Bruyère, writing of the court? "Whoever considers how the happiness of the courtier lies wholly in the face of the prince, that he makes it the one occupation of his life to look on it, and to be seen by it, may,

in some degree, comprehend how in looking on the face of God consists all the glory and happiness of the saint." Yet the countenance of this god usually expressed nothing at all ; it was as grandly cold, serene, and unchangeable as that of any of the marble deities that presided over his fountains.

It was no mean advantage to him that nature had kindly exalted him, at least three inches, above almost every other man of his court. The French were not generally a fine race of men ; but the dress of the period—the high heels, the wig, stiffened and frizzed straight up above the forehead, the lofty plume and looped-up broad-brimmed hat—gave to the *grands* an appearance of height which, as a rule, they had not. Above them towered their king, like Jupiter in Olympus in the midst of the inferior gods, or as the sun, with the lesser lights revolving around him, and shining only in the refulgence of his rays. And something of their glimmer fell on most of them ; for, as has been observed, it is remarkable what a likeness the courtiers generally bore to the king, and what a strong resemblance the portraits of that period have to each other. It is probably owing to the form of the wig, which gave to all faces a similarity of contour.

Walking and talking formed the whole of the business and amusement of life at Versailles, in the intervals of the more exciting occupations afforded by the *fêtes*. But "*toute la France*," as it was customary to say when speaking of the court (the people being counted for less than nothing) could not at one and the same time bask in the sunshine of the royal presence. There remained, however, in Paris, for the solace of those who rarely visited Versailles—

either from choice or because their welcome there did not induce a more assiduous attendance—as also for others who, from various causes, were occasionally absent from that enchanted spot, the *salons* of the Hôtels d'Albret and de Richelieu. La Rochefoucauld was then beginning to be a martyr to the gout, which, of course, excluded him from the royal promenades ; but both he and Madame de La Fayette received at their hôtels, in the Rue de Seine, a distinguished circle of the *beau monde* and *gens de lettres*. There, too, we often meet with Madame de Sévigné and her daughter. But except a little lively and sarcastic criticism on the news of the day, which, of course, meant court intrigues, love, and war, the amusement of their long evenings was the turning and re-turning, changing the form, and often the sense, of two or three maxims. Sometimes they were proposed in the morning by Madame de Sablé, and received in the evening their final polish and keenness of edge from La Rochefoucauld. Madame de Sévigné has acknowledged that their point was occasionally so fine she failed to perceive it.

Mademoiselle at the Luxembourg affected literary tastes, also Madame at the Palais Royal. The latter had received even less education than Mademoiselle, and she had not the same force of character ; her reputation, too, was far from unblemished. But she was young, lively, and good-tempered, and an immense favorite with the king, who kept up a secret correspondence with her. This correspondence was conducted for them by the Marquis de Dangeau ; they being wholly unaware that the same confidential secretary acted for both. It was a secret the

marquis kept to himself, and profited by it ; the publication of his memoirs revealed it.

Some few years later, *préciosité* would seem to have glided into the *salons* of Versailles ; for we are told by Mademoiselle de Scudéry of a discussion, occupying a whole evening there, on the difference between *la joie* and *l'enjouement*. Twice a week a numerous company assembled in the *petit salon*, the *réunion* being called "*l'appartement du roi.*" No strict etiquette was observed ; for though the king was present, as he was not supposed to be holding a court, it was understood that he imposed no restraint on the sociability of his guests. He himself walked about among them, *sans cérémonie*—now playing at billiards or piquet ; now conversing with his courtiers. Sometimes he strolled into the long gallery, which was bordered on both sides by rows of orange trees, placed in boxes of elaborately-chased silver. This gallery formed a sort of luminous avenue, being lighted by an immense number of wax candles, in lustres of rock crystal.

The queen sat with her ladies ; the princesses danced with each other, or with the younger ladies in waiting ; no cavalier being allowed to share in this pastime. The elders, dispersed about the *salons* in groups, either took their seats at the card-tables, of which there were several prepared for their use, or discoursed amongst themselves on subjects that, without fear of evil results, might be proclaimed on the housetops ; for all were aware that every fragment of conversation was carefully gathered up to be reported to the king, and often by listeners the least suspected.

The social freedom which by royal condescension

was supposed to prevail at these receptions was, therefore, mere fiction. No one felt at his ease. They were grand and stately, but not social, *réunions*, and are described by Mademoiselle de Scudéry in her "Entretiens sur divers Sujets," in illustration of the subject she was writing upon—"La Magnificence." The volume was dedicated to Louis XIV.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Madame Scarron.—Le Maréchal d'Albret.—La Maréchale.—Monsieur le Marquis.—Mdlle. de Grand Bois.—The Hôtel de Richelieu.—The Duke's Portrait Gallery.—An Amiable Wife.—Les Amants déclarés.—L'Abbé Testu.—The Pets of the Salons.—L'Abbé Scarron.—Madame de Montespan.—The Princess de Nemours.—Madame Scarron's Pension restored.

MADAME SCARRON'S pension of two thousand livres had ceased to be paid since the death of the queen-mother. From that time she had sent frequent petitions to the king, praying for its renewal, but had little reason to hope that her prayer would be granted. She was reduced almost to entire dependence on her friends and relatives, and the latter were by no means rich ; her brother was indeed a worthless spendthrift, and the cause of much trouble and anxiety to his sister. A part of her time she passed in the country with the Duchess de Montchevreuil. In Paris, the Hôtels d'Albret and de Richelieu were by turns her abode. The proffered hospitality of Ninon she declined, so far as making her house her home ; but she was a frequent visitor there, remaining for days together—the great intimacy and friendship existing between them being evident from Madame Scarron's letters.

Both the Maréchal d'Albret and the Duc de Richelieu had been friends of Scarron, and were constantly met with amongst the gay and distinguished, if rather boisterous, *jeunesse dorée*, who delighted in

the society and licentious wit of the poor crippled poet. The maréchal was a wealthy and dissipated man of pleasure—a Gascon of the Béarnais family of Henri d'Albret. In 1651 he killed in a duel the Marquis de Sévigné, who had supplanted him in the good graces of a certain Madame Gondran. He was one of the many lovers of Madame Scarron ; according to the assertion of those who represent her as vicious and artful, and destitute of moral principles. She was cold and calculating, no doubt ; but as her aim was to acquire consideration, and a position in society, it is not likely that so clever a woman would compromise herself by accepting the attentions of such a man as the maréchal otherwise than as a friend. And a friend he appears to have been ; for he introduced her to his wife, a woman of high character, though considered, in those days of lax morality, severe and prudish. Madame d'Albret received the young widow with much kindness, and would have had her reside constantly with her ; but Madame Scarron was desirous of remaining, as far as possible, free and independent. As she was a skilful embroideress, she was able to do so ; the visits she paid to her wealthy friends enabling her to economize in the expenses of her humble *ménage*.

She endeavored to please in order to secure friends, and generally she was considered amiable and agreeable, and a desirable acquisition to Madame d'Albret's social circle. Her dress, though of inexpensive material, was always well made, graceful, and becoming. Her modesty in this respect was of course much approved by the ladies. " She did not dress beyond her means or her station," which they accepted as a proof that she had no desire to rival or

outshine them ; they pardoned her, therefore, her fine figure and brilliant black eyes, which appear to have been her chief personal attractions. She, however, soon won the admiration of a wealthy man of quality, who made her the offer of his hand and fortune. To the immense astonishment of her friends, she refused him. Even Madame d'Albret was amazed that she had no other reason to give for declining the honor of becoming Madame la Marquise than that M. le Marquis was a man of notoriously dissipated life. Madame Scarron's letter on this subject to her friend Ninon, contrasting the *grand seigneur* with poor Scarron, of whom she speaks in the highest terms, is a most pleasing one. It leaves on the mind a very favorable impression both of the writer and the witty and satirical, but kindly-natured poet. One regrets that it should afterwards have been shame and confusion to her to hear him named, though in the presence of the magnificent Louis.

Madame Scarron was also a welcome visitor at the Hôtel de Richelieu. Though somewhat reserved (*par politique*) it was evident, from her occasional remarks, that she was not wanting in *esprit*. She had been unusually well educated, had read extensively, and had much knowledge of the world. The vicissitudes of her life, from her earliest years, gave a tinge of romance to her history, and drew attention to her personally ; which, at first, was not without its influence in opening the way to the attainment of that "consideration" she was ever striving after and seeking to extend.

The Duke and Duchess de Richelieu were rather an extraordinary couple. The duke was the heir of the great cardinal ; dignity upon dignity had been

heaped upon him ; he had been regarded as one of the first *partis* in the kingdom, and several of those great families “ *en velours rouge cramoisi* ”—as Madame de Sévigné says—had sought his alliance. But the duke was steeped in vanity. He admired himself, as a handsome man, a man of fine intellect, a man of high character—*un preux chevalier*. A Mademoiselle de Grand Bois, a lady possessed of neither fortune nor beauty, and who was also many years the duke's senior, contrived to carry off this great matrimonial prize. She is said to have had more *savoir faire* than *esprit*, and to have so flattered the duke and praised his great qualities, that she convinced him she had as high an opinion of him as he had of himself. This endowed her, in his eyes, with merit far outweighing fortune and beauty. Her greatest difficulty lay in securing him when she had caught him ; in keeping him in the mind to marry until he was actually married ; for he was accustomed to take violent likings and dislikings, passing from one emotion to the other with extraordinary suddenness. But Mademoiselle de Grand Bois, in spite of this fickleness of disposition, succeeded in becoming Duchesse de Richelieu.

Being of an easy, kindly temper, she bore with all her duke's caprices, continued to administer doses of flattery with an unsparing hand, and was very forbearing to his numerous weaknesses. Both, however, had a predilection for the society of *les gens de lettres et les gens d'esprit*, and twice, weekly, received at their hotel a very brilliant and distinguished circle. There might be met the wittiest women in Parisian society—Madame de Cornuel, of whom even her confessor said, “ Every sin she confessed was an

epigram ;'' Madame de Coulanges, whose reputation for *esprit* was second only to Madame de Cornuel's ; Madame de Sévigné. Mademoiselle de Scudéry, Madame de La Fayette, and the Countess de la Suze—who wrote elegies, greatly admired in those days—were all constant frequenters of the *salons* of the Duke and Duchess de Richelieu, together with a throng of other celebrities—poets, *littérateurs*, and *gens de la cour*.

In the *greniers*, or lofts, of the Hôtel de Richelieu there were lying about, *pêle-mêle*, numberless dusty pictures—soiled, torn, and evidently little valued by their owner. They were the portraits of a long line, not of ancestors, but of forgotten friends—friends, once esteemed, honored, loved ; now, faded, blotted out altogether from the memory of the fickle duke, and their places filled up by new ones. It was his custom, when a friendship suddenly seized him for any one newly introduced at his hôtel, or whose merits, after long acquaintance, unexpectedly dawned upon him, to be very urgent in requesting to be favored with the portrait of this estimable individual. Unfortunately, the benighted world knew not then of cartes-de-visite and album portraits, or the duke—as people do now—might have filled his portrait albums, instead of his *greniers*, with friendship's offerings and the notorieties of the day. Few, if any, declined to humor his whim, and generally they sat to the duke's portrait-painter—for he was a patron of the arts, and his friendships kept his *protégés* busily employed.

When the coveted treasure was brought to him—if the warmth of his friendship had experienced no abatement—the portrait was fixed at the head of his

bed, or on the wall opposite to it. There it remained until it had to give place to a newer, if not more worthy or deserving, friend. These portraits were hung in a line round his room, and whenever a new one came in the others had to move on, that nearest the door going into the anteroom, where the same rule was followed—the portrait that had there reached the door being borne aloft to the *grenier*; the tomb of the Capulets, where lay the buried friendships of the duke.

According to the fashion of the day, the duke was addicted to gambling. His losses were enormous, and poor Madame de Richelieu trembled as she saw him rushing headlong to ruin. But on no account would she allow him to perceive her emotion. His self-complacency must not be ruffled. The shock to his feelings would be too severe, should he discover that she thought he could err, or that in any respect he fell short of perfection. So estate after estate was gambled away, while his duchess smiled sweetly upon him.

The ladies of the Hôtel de Richelieu imitated those of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, in having each her "*galant et honnête homme*," but with this difference, he was called "*son amant déclaré*," whether the lady was married or not. The perfect propriety of it was signified in the word *déclaré*, which meant that his attentions were publicly paid and received. There was no mystery, no attempt at concealment; therefore, though constantly attended by her "*amant déclaré*," her husband could make no objection to the arrangement and her reputation in no degree suffer. The Cardinal d'Etrées was the "*amant déclaré*" of Madame Scarron. "*Il plaisait son esprit sans toucher*

son cœur," Madame de Caylus informs us ; and she probably received the information from her aunt, as she herself at that time was not born.

Another ecclesiastic, l'Abbé Testu, was the "*amant déclaré*" of the duchess. He also affected to assume at the Hotel de Richelieu the post filled by Voiture at Rambouillet. But he had neither the wit, the animal spirits, nor the epigrammatic talent that gained Voiture his reputation and the epithet of "*bel esprit*." The *abbé* was also a favored dangler of Madame de Coulanges, and several other ladies, to whom he addressed his frivolous sentimentalities in rhymes. He was never so happy as when, without any competitor at hand for the smiles of the *beau sexe*, he shone, alone in his glory, the centre of a circle of fair dames who all lavished their smiles upon him. But, as they were witty or simple—some laughed at him under the rose, maliciously encouraging him in his fond belief that he was the most brilliant of men ; while others were really impressed by his marvellous powers of rapidly producing impromptu after impromptu, on diamond eyes and coral lips, jet black and golden hair.

But like Voiture, the *abbé* had studied his impromptus at home, for spontaneous utterance in society as opportunity could be made or found. There was, however, this difference between them : that of the sparkling wit that animated the brilliant *bagatelles* of the famous *bel esprit*, not a glimmer could be traced in the rhymed nothings which the fashionable *abbé* inflicted on his auditors. Perhaps the ladies were grateful for his attempts to be pointedly pretty when paying them compliments. They took the will for the deed, and, to reward him, prayed the king to

bestow a bishopric upon him. But the sublime Louis gave no heed to their solicitations. On one occasion, to mark his deep displeasure at the frivolous flirting propensities of this butterfly *abbé*, he replied to Madame d'Heudicourt, who was extolling his learning, his wit, and his many excellent qualities, "*que l'Abbé Testu n'était pas assez homme de bien pour conduire les autres.*" "*Il attend pour le devenir,*" answered madame, "*que votre majesté l'ait fait évêque.*" But l'Abbé Testu waited in vain for a bishopric, and, like the Abbé Cotin, whom in character he much resembled, remained an *abbé* to the end of his days.

But for Boileau, Molière, and Madame de Sévigné, these *abbés* would have been as little known to posterity as many others who fluttered as ladies' pets in the *salons* of the seventeenth century. *Très galants hommes* for the most part they were—polished in manners, very good-looking, hair and moustache always carefully arranged. The *soutane* conferred many privileges on the harmless, useful *abbé*. Often he amused a circle of ladies by reading a play or romance, while they were engaged with their embroidery or lace. He was usually clever at *bouts rimés* and *vers de société*. Many of the younger *abbés*, since music had come into fashion, could strum a guitar; if they did not themselves sing Quinault's tender ditties, they could accompany any lady that did. Then the dress—sober, and severely innocent of ribands and lace, strongly contrasting with that of the gay cavaliers, yet not unbecoming. The presence of a distinguished-looking *abbé* seemed to sanctify any boudoir of which he had the privilege of the *entrée*, and to impart a *souffçon* of graceful piety to the

occupations of the party of fair dames, who in the morning frequently assembled there.

Probably the wittiest of all *abbés* was the Abbé Scarron ; and, had Richelieu lived, a *jeu-de-mots* might, as had happened more than once before, have procured him a bishopric. Scarron, however, from his infirmities, was the delight of no *salon* but his own. But he had the gallantry to throw off the clerical character, which sat so lightly upon him, for the sake of Françoise d'Aubigné. It is a question whether he would, even for her *beaux yeux*, have thrown up a bishopric and prayed to be secularized. It is well that he was not thus tempted ; for there would have been no Madame Scarron, no Madame de Maintenon, and Louis no saint in his latter days, though inclined, by anticipation, to be a Latter-day saint.

The Marquis de Montespan was nearly related to the Maréchal d'Albret, and he and the marquise were constant frequenters both of the Hôtel d'Albret and the Hôtel de Richelieu. Madame de Montespan was no less *spirituelle* than beautiful. She and her sisters were celebrated for a peculiarly piquant turn of thought, expressed with much grace and originality, called "*l'esprit des Mortemar*," because hereditary in their family. Her brother, the Maréchal de Vivonne, was famed for his *bons mots*. Her conversation was lively and agreeable, but generally a little sarcastic. Court scandal was a favorite topic with Madame de Montespan. The ill-concealed intrigues of Madame and the king ; the jealousy of La Vallière ; the timid anxiety with which the queen often glanced at her faithless spouse, when he seemed to be complacently admir-

ing some newly-presented young beauty, all provoked her keenest ridicule. Of La Vallière she spoke with cutting contempt, and her position, of recognized mistress of the king, she professed to regard as degrading. Yet, already, 1668, she must have contemplated the possibility of succeeding to that distinguished post ; for she entreated her husband to remove her to Guienne, to be out of the way of the pursuit of the king. But he, not regarding the danger as so imminent, and having a blind confidence in her, failed to give much heed to the warning.

Her satirical portraits amused the social circle, and all laughed with her at the peculiarities and failings of their absent friends so wittily placed before them in a new, if distorting, light ; though well aware that none were spared by her, and that they might themselves be the next objects of her *fine raillerie*. Madame Scarron, observant and reflective, may thus have become well acquainted with the true character of the woman who afterwards ruled the king and his court so imperiously ; treated the queen with extreme *hauteur*, and the ministers as creatures appointed to obey her behests, but whom the clever and designing, and discreetly humble widow made the stepping-stone to her own elevation.

An event, however, occurred about this time which seemed likely to remove Madame Scarron permanently from France. It was the marriage of the Princess Maria, daughter of the Duc de Nemours, with Affonso VI., King of Portugal. The Cardinal d'Etrées was the chief ecclesiastic commissioned to conduct the young lady to Lisbon. Ladies-in-wait-

ing were appointed, though, it appeared, none particularly desired that honor—for to leave the court of France for the Portuguese court was looked upon as banishment from the world and its pleasures. A lady in quality of companionable attendant was, therefore, sought for, and Cardinal d'Etrées immediately bethought him of the widow Scarron, who was not wholly unknown to the princess. She approved of the cardinal's suggestion, and advantageous pecuniary offers being made to Madame Scarron, she accepted the engagement proposed to her. But fate willed that Madame de Montespan, who—though not yet quite openly, for her husband was for a time an obstacle to her advancement—had made considerable progress in the favor of the king, should present another petition for the renewal of the widow's pension, and also speak a good word in support of it. At the solicitation of the marquise, the pension was granted, and her future rival immediately resigned her Portuguese appointment.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Death of Henriette de France.—The Funeral Oration.—The Crime of Heresy.—Conquest of Flanders.—Fêtes at St. Germain.—Siege of Dôle.—Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.—The Phlegmatic Dutch Envoy.

ONE of the grandest of the grandly eloquent funeral orations of the great Bossuet, was that on the queen of Charles I., Henriette de France, who died in 1669. The misfortunes of the queen, the fate of her husband, the rebellious people, and the "usurper," formed a theme, which, worked up by the immense oratorical power of this "thunderer of the Church," produced a striking effect on his auditors. The heretical nation setting at defiance the right divine of kings, and slaying "the Lord's anointed;" "the scorner sitting in his seat;" the altars of God defiled; the loving wife flying with her children for safety to the home of her youth—a foreign land to them; the pious resignation of the unfortunate queen; the death of the usurper; the repentance of the nation and recall of the exiled prince to the throne of his ancestors, were incidents that made up a perfect drama. And thrilling emotion they excited, as depicted by an orator who had the art of seizing all the resources of his subject, and who, varying his style with the varying sensations he sought to produce, was by turns grandly energetic, sublime, tender, pathetic.

The death of Queen Henriette caused little inter-

ruption to the dissipations of the court. She had rarely appeared there of late, having preferred, since the marriage of her daughter, to reside almost constantly at the convent of Ste. Madeleine de Chaillot, of which La Mère Angélique (Mademoiselle de La Fayette, to whom Louis XIII. was so romantically attached) was the abbess. A great friendship had existed between them from girlhood. Few people now remembered Louis XIII., and those few had no respect for his memory ; the strong affection these two women still bore him was therefore another bond of sympathy between them. The convent, too, was a pleasant retreat, beautiful in its situation, with charming grounds and gardens, of great extent. And there, Henriette, who cared naught for the world or its pleasures, after Charles had perished on the scaffold, peacefully spent the last years of her life ; disturbed, perhaps, now and then by the whispers that reached her of the dissipations and intrigues of her daughter, and the dissolute life and surroundings of her son, Charles II. She was fast fading from the memory of the Parisian *beau monde* when her death was announced. M. de Condom—as Bossuet was then called—revived a temporary interest in her chequered career. He had surpassed himself in this funeral oration ; he had dwelt forcibly on the crime of heresy, and so long as there remained in the memory of his auditors any lingering echo of his eloquent words, they would exclaim : “*Ah ! quelle était malheureuse cette pauvre reine ! Dieu ! quel sort ! d’épouser un roi Huguenot ; de vivre parmi ces hérétiques insulaires ; une nation abandonnée de Dieu. Mais la sainte Vierge a beaucoup prié pour elle, et elle a eu du temps pour s’occuper de son salut. Dieu soit loué !*”

Now the scene changes. The talk is of war, and the rumor is rife that the king will make the campaign.

The king had already added to the glory that covered him, that of the fame of a warrior. In 1667, he had looked on, at a safe distance, while Maréchal Turenne and Luxembourg took possession of Flanders. And this conquest was made not by force of arms, but by treaty with the Emperor Leopold I. (who had been assisted by a few French troops in warding off the attacks of the warlike and formidable Turks, under Mahomet IV.), that no opposition should be offered to France in the appropriation of that province ; which belonged to Spain, whose monarch, then a child, was the feeble-minded Charles II. The towns were all open places, with garrisons of a few hundred Spaniards, and the victorious generals had but to walk into them to make them their own. The difficulty was to retain possession of them. Louvois advised the adoption of Vauban's new system of military fortification ; of which Lille was the first example, and Vauban the first governor of the citadel.

Louis, after this military promenade, returned to his capital, to give brilliant *fêtes* in his own honor, and to receive the due reward of his great achievements—the acclamations of his loyal subjects ; the unbounded applause of his courtiers ; and the enthusiastic admiration of his mistresses. St. Germain—which still divided with Versailles the honor of giving *fêtes* on a grand scale—was the scene of endless festivities, when, in the following year, to the astonishment of the court, the king again set out for the wars, accompanied by the young Duc d'Enghien, son of the Grand Condé. Secretly, preparations

had been made for taking possession of La Franche Comté. Jealous of the reputation of Turenne, and of his increased favor with the king—since he had abjured the errors of Protestantism to embrace those of Catholicism—Condé desired to share in the dangers and glory of their expedition, which was, indeed, but another “*veni, vidi, vici*” affair. Secret intrigues with the governors of towns, substantial bribes, and twenty thousand men in the background, more than sufficed for the conquest of the province.

At the approach of Condé and Luxembourg, Besançon and Salins surrender. The news is brought to Louis, and instantly he leaves St. Germain to share in the glory of these hard-earned victories. Dôle actually resists! The governor has a garrison of four hundred men, and conceives it to be his duty to make a stand, even against the conquering hosts of the Great Condé. The king, too, considers this an appropriate occasion for displaying his valor. He will besiege Dôle in person. His tents, accordingly, are pitched some two or three miles away; and there, surrounded by all the ceremonial of St. Germain, in miniature, he awaits the reports of Condé, and learns from him in person, from hour to hour, how this perilous attack is proceeding. “*On ne lui voyait point,*” says Voltaire with amusing irony, “*dans les travaux de la guerre, ce courage emporté de François I. et de Henri IV. qui cherchaient toutes les espèces de dangers. Il se contentait de ne les pas craindre et d’engager tout le monde à s’y précipiter pour lui avec ardeur.*” And this proved his superior wisdom. Like those great monarchs, he sought “the bubble reputation,” and obtained it; but he kept carefully out of the way of the perils of the cannon’s mouth. Consequently, when Dôle was taken—and it could

not of course hold out long—Louis, with great parade as a conquering hero, entered the town, and, within twelve days from his departure from St. Germain, with the connivance of the emperor, the young king of Spain was robbed of another province.

Other nations now thought it time to begin to assemble troops, and the emperor, repenting of his treaty with Louis, secretly encouraged Holland to enter into alliance with Sweden and England, in order to check this sort of warfare on the part of France, and to preserve the balance of power in Europe. That such a little upstart state as Holland should have the audacity to think of limiting his conquests, excited, not unnaturally, the wrath of the great soldier. But Spain had turned to her and sought her interference ; and this wounded his pride still more. He was overwhelmed with indignation, and, in his heart, vowed to be avenged, but perceived that it would be well to defer the chastisement of the little state until prepared to inflict it with *éclat*. To save himself, therefore, from the further indignity of being forced into a peace by Holland and her allies, he hastened to propose it himself to Spain. Aix-la-Chapelle was the place chosen for the plenipotentiaries to assemble in conference ; but the terms of the peace were actually settled at St. Germain, between Van-Beuning, the burgomaster of Amsterdam, and the minister Lyonne. The Dutch envoy treated with equal indifference the splendors of the French court ; the haughty airs and tone of superiority assumed by the ministers appointed to confer with him ; and the imperious manners of the Grand Monarque, who—though unwilling to surrender any part of his conquests—was compelled to restore La Franche Comté.

CHAPTER XLV.

A Royal Progress.—Mdlle. de Montpensier.—The Count de Lauzun.—The King's Historiographer.—A Numerous Retinue.—The Three Queens.—Preparing to Invade Holland.—A Windfall for Charles.—La Belle Bretonne.—La Vallière's Star Setting.—Monsieur again Jealous.—Death of Madame.—Its Cause doubtful.

LE GRAND MONARQUE has set out, ostensibly, on a royal progress through La Flandre Française—the name then given to that portion of Flanders he had lately taken possession of. Never had either Flanders or France itself witnessed a pageant so splendid. The real object, however, of this imposing display is to conduct Madame to Calais, where, being so near the land of her birth, she will, naturally, wish to see it, and to avail herself of so favorable an opportunity of paying her brother a visit. But, for reasons of state, this visit, already arranged, is a secret known only to Madame and the king, Turenne and Louvois.

The royal party is a numerous one. The carriages prepared for them are surpassingly sumptuous—large, commodious, and slung on springs; luxuriously cushioned, and fitted up with rich velvet and an abundance of gold embroideries and fringes. They have glass windows—an improvement now generally adopted in the carriages of the rich—and they may be raised or lowered at pleasure. The paintings on the panels are masterpieces, usually mythological

subjects, in which, under the aspect of a god, you may trace the features of Louis XIV. The liveries of the crowd of lackeys, the harness and trappings of the horses, are of corresponding magnificence.

Besides Madame, the queen is of the party, also Madame de Montespan—now *surintendante de la maison de la reine*—Madame de La Vallière, Mademoiselle de Keroual, several princesses, and the ladies of the royal household most distinguished for beauty. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, with her numerous pages and ladies-in-waiting, and carriages of her own, rivalling the king's, has joined the *cortège*. But less for the sake of increasing its brilliancy and partaking of the festivities—which began when the pageant left St. Germain, and are to continue throughout its *route*—than to be near Lauzun, colonel of the Royal Regiment of Guards, and now high in favor with the king. The splendor of his uniform, and his eccentric airs and graces, as he rides at the head of his regiment, seeking to attract the attention of his royal master, please Mademoiselle ; who desires to dazzle the gallant colonel by this display of her wealth, and to charm him by smiles and gracious manners, preparatory to making him an offer of marriage. She would greatly resent his presumption should *he* dare to speak of marriage to *her*. Poor Mademoiselle ! she, who in the bloom of her beauty rejected princes and kings, and scornfully laughed at Mazarin's offer of the crown of France, which she had been supposed to be so anxious to wear, is much to be pitied for falling in love—and for the very first time—with this “Cadet de Lauzun,” when so far advanced on the road of life as half-way between forty and fifty. The little dauphin, nine years of age,

is there with his court—the Duc and Duchess de Montausier, governor and governess ; Bossuet, just appointed preceptor, and a train of attendants.

M. Péliſson is the historiographer appointed by the king to accompany this royal pageant. The same who so learnedly and eloquently defended the unfortunate Marquis de Belle Isle, but who is now basking in the sunshine of royal favor, and lauding the great Louis with fervor unsurpassed by the most abject of courtiers. During his four years and a half of solitude in the Bastille, he seriously reflected on the errors of his ways. No sooner was he liberated than he abjured Protestantism ; and shortly after he received his reward. Louis remembered the eloquence of his appeals—much of which was due to Mademoiselle de Scudéry—and employed him to write the history of the brilliant conquest of Franche Comté. Péliſson sounded the trumpet of fame so grandly that even the hero of that great military achievement was content. Thenceforth, Péliſson prospered : he became an *abbé*, and was zealous almost overmuch for his new faith, at the time of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

All the cooks and the scullions with the royal *batteries de cuisine*, and the *maîtres-d'hôtel*, with the silver, the china, the glass, and provisions of all kinds, together with workmen innumerable, to fit up the banqueting and ball-rooms, precede the king and the royal *cortège*. Their business is to prepare at the appointed places for his Majesty's arrival. With them are also wagons, laden with beds and splendid furniture from the royal palaces—a party of pioneers going before to clear or make the roads for this mighty procession. Fifteen thousand soldiers march before

the court, for the reinforcement of the garrisons ; the king's staff officers ride near his carriage, the " Cent Gardes," Suisses, also accompany him, and fifteen thousand soldiers follow—a menace to the people, should any signs of dissatisfaction be evinced at this triumphal march through their country. For, although peace is signed, the French are looked upon in Flanders as even less desirable masters than the more distant Spaniards. Many of that nation also form part of the population, and the taunting message sent by the Spanish Government to its generals and *employés* in Flanders and La Franche Comté, that " if the king of France had but employed his lackeys to take possession of these provinces, he might have saved himself the trouble of going in person, and with an army, to do so," has wounded their pride exceedingly. A display of fireworks announces to the mayors, or chief magistrates of the various towns visited, the approach of the court, and the special honor about to be inflicted upon them.

With this pompous retinue—like a cloud of locusts, devouring all that lay before it—French Flanders was traversed. The Flemish ladies were especially anxious to see " the three queens ;" and all who could find or make any pretext for visiting them met with a very gracious reception. For the king, courting popularity, distributed with a liberal hand to the ladies many *souvenirs* of this royal progress—such as pearls and diamonds, bracelets, earrings, massive gold chains, and other trinkets ; as well as fifteen hundred louis d'or, daily, in "*gratifications*" to the officers and troops in garrison. He was very desirous of propitiating all classes in Flanders, because of his designs on their neighbors, the Dutch.

Immediately after the signing of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the king, and his minister Louvois, began quietly, but diligently, to prepare for the annihilation of the flourishing little state which had presumed to step forward as a check to his ambition. Thirty vessels of war were building, each to carry fifty guns. A larger army than France had ever before possessed was being raised, and splendidly equipped, and the infantry disciplined and drilled by the famous General Martinet, who was arming several regiments with the bayonet—which from that time entirely superseded the pike, and was then considered the most terrible weapon that military art had invented. The cavalry, under another tactician, the Vicomte de Fourilles, were being exercised in new evolutions, and subjected to more systematic rules and regulations, as regarded discipline. Stores were being collected, and more efficient methods of transport devised. Unsuspecting Holland, looking on these preparations as merely a menace to Spain, furnished a considerable part of the ammunition destined to be employed against herself, thus aiding the designs of her enemy ; her supplies of military stores, generally, being still unreplaced when she found she needed them most.

But when all that ambition, human foresight, and a desire for revenge could suggest, had been done to ensure success in this enterprise, it was felt by both the minister and the king, that, unless England could be detached from her alliance with Holland, these vast preparations might possibly prove very little disastrous to the Dutch, or even to have been made wholly in vain. Charles cared neither for France nor Holland, and regarded not the honor of his

country. A life of dissolute gaiety, and plenty of money, to squander on his own *menus plaisirs* and those of his favorites and ladies-in-waiting, comprised all he desired. Dunquerque, acquired by Cromwell, he had already sold to France for five millions of francs. And a very acceptable windfall it was to him, as he could not obtain money with the same facility as his more despotic cousin of France. It was likely, therefore, that it would be convenient to him to receive another good round sum ; and that he would have no very strong scruples of conscience to overcome, should the conditions involved in its acceptance include even an act of baseness.

To attain his ends, the bright thought occurred to Louis of sending a lady to Charles, as plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary—the intriguing and unscrupulous Madame ; who, whether in person she resembled her brother or not, was exceedingly like him in disposition and character. A sister, however, is not always the most influential pleader to send to a brother. Mademoiselle de Keroual, *une belle Bretonne*, was therefore attached to the mission. Finding the English fleet anchored off Dunquerque, the lady diplomatists embarked at that port, accompanied by a part of the French court. After a good tossing in the Channel, they landed at Dover, where they remained for a day or two to repose. Charles, being informed of their arrival, hastened to meet them at Canterbury. And there his accustomed deference to the wishes of ladies, his great friendship for his cousin of France, also some regard to the empty condition of the royal private purse, but, above all, his utter want of the slightest sense of honor, induced him

to accept the handsome consideration offered him, and to consent to pick a quarrel with the Dutchmen—to leave them, in fact, so far as he was concerned, to be dealt with according to the tender mercies of the Grand Monarque.

Mdlle. de Keroual was so well pleased either with England or its merry monarch, or perhaps with both, that she did not return to France ; and Charles was so well pleased with *la belle Bretonne* that he created her Duchess of Portsmouth. Madame, however, having accomplished the honorable object of her mission, came back triumphant. Though she had lost her "*attachée*," she had the treaty of Canterbury in her pocket, duly signed and sealed.

During her absence, the king's progress being ended, he had given a series of entertainments ; balls, *ballets*, and plays. He and the queen, with Mademoiselle, Mesdames de Montespan and La Vallière, and the ladies and gentlemen of the court, had danced and performed in them, to the delight and wonder of the Flemish *beaux* and *belles*. The great homage paid by the king to Madame de Montespan opened the eyes of the court, of the "*maîtresse en titre*," and of the poor little queen to the waning favor of La Vallière and the approaching triumph of her successor. All were, of course, ready to worship the rising star, at the first signal from the king that such was his royal will and pleasure. But that signal was not yet given—the haughty airs of Montespan ; the timid, silent trouble of the queen ; the reproaches and tears of La Vallière, being, under the circumstances, exhibited *très mal-à-propos*. For the king and his three queens were the observed of all observers, and living, from necessity during this progress, very

much in public, their words, their looks, their actions, were closely scrutinized, and became the subject of very free, and often very merry, comment. The king, aware of this, was annoyed—it was a crime in his eyes. Though it is not possible to imagine that it ever entered his thoughts that he himself could appear ridiculous, yet he may have possessed just so much of a Frenchman's sensitiveness as to perceive that his three queens did, and to be irritated by it. Positive blindness was the rule at court, both to his and his mistresses immoralities; the arrival of Madame, therefore, could not have occurred more opportunely, both on account of the satisfaction he received, from the success of her and the fair Bretonne's diplomacy, and the pretext it afforded for immediately returning to St. Germain.

The *ménage* of Madame and Monsieur was rather a disorderly one. If the conduct of Monsieur was bad, that of Madame was little better. “*Elle manquait à Monsieur en beaucoup de choses, et l'aigreur était grande de toutes parts,*” are the words of Madame de La Fayette, her infinite friend and chosen biographer. Monsieur disapproved this visit to England, whose object was not communicated to him, as well as the secret but great intimacy that continued to exist between Madame and the king. Some suspicions of poisoning attached to him, when, not long after her return, her death took place rather suddenly at St. Cloud. They, however, seem to have been wholly unfounded; and St. Simon's statement that the poison was sent from Rome, by the Chevalier de Lorraine, a discarded and banished favorite of Monsieur, is unworthy of credit. St. Simon gives the story without much variation, very likely, from

the words in which it was repeated to him, thirty years or more after the event (for it occurred five years before he was born), by a friend who had heard it from a man supposed to have been implicated in the motiveless crime. The man was pardoned, he says, by Louis XIV. on confessing to him, in secret, that Madame was poisoned, and giving him his assurance that Monsieur was not concerned in the vile deed, and had no knowledge of it.

The poison is said to have been diamond-dust, put into a glass of chicory-water—which Madame was accustomed to take daily—a poison that would have no other effect than, when, as at a royal banquet in ancient days, there was thrown

“ A pearl of great price in a goblet of gold,
More costly to render the draught.”

Her death, more probably, was owing to the effects of a dissipated life on a weakly constitution ; or she may have been bled to death ; as the Princess of Conti was beaten and battered to death, to rouse her from a lethargy, or supposed apoplexy. The doctor was too generally brought in, in those days, but to give the patient the *coup de grace*. Of medical or surgical skill there was none, and less progress was made in the healing art than in any other.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Funeral Oration of Madame.—Madame's Last Hours.—Great Pulpit-Orators.—Preachers at the Play.—The Pulpit and the Stage.—Fénélon.—Télémaque.—Peterborough at Cambrai.—Cambrai during the Wars.—St. Simon's Portrait of Fénélon.

MADAME was but in her twenty-seventh year when she died. Her funeral oration, pronounced by Bossuet, was one of that great preacher's finest displays of oratory. The impression it made on his hearers was almost unparalleled. "*Cette oraison funèbre,*" says Voltaire, "*eut le plus grand et le plus rare des succès, celui de faire verser des larmes à la cour.*" The orator himself was deeply affected. Madame had been much moved by Bossuet's oration on the death of her mother in the preceding year, and had expressed her intention, shortly after that event, to begin to "*faire son salut.*" Bossuet had, therefore, been requested to come to her when she was at leisure, and talk with her on the subject.

After a round of dissipation it was customary to leave off jewellery and rouge, and to spend a few days, *en retraite*, in some fashionable convent—usually the Carmelites. Confession and absolution followed; and the fine ladies of that period were ready, with a clear conscience, to return to the world to go through the same process again. And it is probable that Madame had not neglected to perform those outward acts of piety. Few ladies neglected them, since Anne of Austria had introduced the fashion of uniting "*la*

dévotion avec la belle galanterie," and Louis XIV. had continued it.

But Bossuet was with Madame in her last hours ; striving to soothe the agony of her deathbed, and to allay her mental distress with words of comfort and hope. He had seen this princess, whose gaiety and wit, but two days before, charmed and enlivened a dissolute court, expire in the prime of life—her last breath expended in one long, piercing cry of anguish. It can well be believed that the faltering voice of the great preacher, as he uttered the opening words of his discourse, followed by momentary inability to continue—the silence broken only by the sobs of his auditors—proceeded, not from mere oratorical art seeking to produce effect, but from real emotion. Who does not know those opening words :

"O nuit désastreuse ! O nuit effroyable ! où retentit tout à coup, comme un éclat de tonnerre cette accablante nouvelle : Madame se meurt !—Madame est morte !"

Throughout, this simple oration is sublimely pathetic, yet so natural, so simple. If there is art in it, it is the perfection of art, for it is nowhere apparent ; but the voice and action of the orator would naturally impart to it a still greater and far more impressive interest.

On the stage, and in the pulpit, no country has excelled France, and it is doubtful whether the latter has ever been filled by more powerful orators than the great preachers of the time of Louis XIV. Amongst them must be included the rival of Bossuet and Bourdaloue, Jean Claude, the eloquent Protestant minister of Charenton ; with whom Bossuet so long contended, in the famous Conference on the subject of the authority on which certain doctrines of

their respective faiths were founded. It was probably to Claude that Madame de Sévigné alluded in her letter of February 5th, 1674 : "*Le père Bourdaloue,*" she says, "*fit un sermon le jour de Notre Dame, qui transporta tout le monde. Il était d'une force à faire trembler les courtisans, et jamais prédicateur évangélique n'a prêché plus hautement ni généreusement les vérités chrétiennes.*"

Yet, with the exception of Claude, who, not being of the court, was not exposed to the same temptation, rarely did even these magnates of the Church fail to fall in with the prevailing disposition to flatter the vanity of the king. They launched out boldly and denounced the vices of the day ; they spoke of death and judgment to come in tones and words that thrilled through every heart ; yet, when their eyes turned towards the king, these great masters of oratorical art, by gesture, by change of expression, by momentary but sudden silence, or other effective action, seemed to indicate that there was present one great being, lifted above the rest of poor humanity, to whom none of those things applied.

They were, indeed, preachers by profession, distinct from the priesthood ; they had their *loge grillée* at the theatre, where, hidden from vulgar gaze, they studied the attitudes, the gestures, and the varying expression of countenance of the principal actors, both male and female. Molière, who was an excellent comedian—as all actors were then called—and played the chief part in his own plays ; the inimitable Baron, who succeeded him ; Champmeslé, with whom Racine was in love, and for the display of whose great tragic powers his first plays were chiefly written ; Desœillets, and other celebrities of the stage—all served as models to the celebrities of the pulpit.

For the pulpit was as the stage, "a thing of fashion, a piece of display." But the preacher denounced the player, from whom so much of his effective action was borrowed, and while often using it to give force to his words, when pointing out to others the road to heaven, forbade the poor players even to hope that St. Peter would open its gates to them. Condemned to the lower regions, these outcasts from heaven must not, in death, mingle their dust with that of the flock of the faithful. Molière, who died while playing in the "*Malade imaginaire*," in February, 1673, was, as is well known, refused Christian burial. His wife petitioned in vain the Archbishop of Paris, the infamous *débauché*, Harlai, and only at the instance of Louis XIV. did he allow of the interment, secretly, in the cemetery of the chapel of St. Joseph, in the Faubourg de Montmartre. Two priests attended, but the usual prayers were not intoned, and no burial service was read. Yet Molière deserved not only Christian burial, but a funeral oration ; and far more than many to whom that vain honor was accorded. If he was too subservient to the king, so were those great orators of the church, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Massillon, and the rest.

Perhaps Fénelon, who appeared somewhat later in the century, was less of a courtier than others, though apparently by nature adapted for one. At all events, he did not find favor with the Grand Monarque, who called him, '*l'homme le plus chimérique de son royaume* ;' and he excited the envy of Bossuet, who, in his character of "*le père de l'Eglise*," caballed against him. Fénelon was ordered to repair to his diocese ; his book, "*Les Maximes des Saints*," was denounced ; and he was accused of fatal heresy in

asserting, with the Quietists, that "God should be loved for Himself." But his unpardonable crime in the eyes of the king was the work that obtained for him his world-wide renown—"Télémaque." Louis saw in it a censure on himself and his government. In the love of flattery, in the extravagance, the undertaking of useless wars, the disregard of the lives of his subjects, and the ruin of the state by oppressive taxation, attributed to Idoménée, he recognized his own portrait. Mentor, addressing Idoménée, says : "*Une vaine ambition vous a poussé jusqu'au bord du précipice ; à force de vouloir paraître grand, vous avez pensé ruiner votre véritable grandeur.*" And Louis, when he read this work, from a manuscript copy, found himself exactly in the position described. He was mortified beyond measure ; but less at the truthfulness he discovered in it than at the audacity of the author in telling the truth. In reference to the denizens of the infernal regions, the observation occurs : "*On remarquait que les plus méchants d'entre les rois, étaient ceux à qui on avait donné les plus magnifiques louanges pendant leur vie.*" This, also, Louis appropriated, as a hint of what was reserved for him hereafter. Much more to the same effect, and equally irritating, he found in the work ; for he read the whole of it—interested, probably, in spite of his displeasure.

As the king had no magnanimity in his character, he was unable to pardon censure, under any form, on himself or his government. He forbade the publication of "Télémaque ;" which was not written, as is sometimes asserted, for the use of Fénélon's pupil, the Duke of Burgundy, but was composed in his leisure hours, after his retirement to his diocese. His *valet de chambre* is said secretly to have copied it and

sent it to Amsterdam for publication—thus, spreading throughout Europe the name and fame of the archbishop, notwithstanding the displeasure of the king. How Louis' manuscript copy was obtained, does not very clearly appear.

Fénélon was one of the most amiable of men. There was a spice of romance in his character, which, with his pleasing personal appearance and distinguished manners, was very attractive. Banished from the court, he never returned to it, but passed the rest of his life at Cambrai. He was greatly beloved ; no person of distinction passed through, or within a considerable distance of, the place of his residence without visiting the archbishop, to whose hospitable abode all were kindly and courteously welcomed. The eccentric Lord Peterborough was his guest for a fortnight or more. While at Cambrai, he wrote to a friend in England, that, if he stayed another week with Fénélon his example would make a Christian of him, in spite of himself. During the wars, when fighting occurred in or near his diocese, he received into his spacious archiepiscopal residence the sick and wounded, irrespective of nation, rank, or creed, and had them carefully attended to and provided for. When the royal troops were suffering from scarcity of provisions, he opened his granaries and supplied them gratuitously. Even the king felt compelled to praise him ; and Marlborough, who commanded the English armies, so highly esteemed this good and great archbishop, from whom his disabled soldiers had received so much kindness, that he ordered his domain to be spared from the ravages of the troops. The Duke of Burgundy was strongly attached to him. Had he succeeded to the throne,

and the archbishop lived, he would, no doubt, as was generally expected and desired, have recalled him from Cambrai to take part in the government. But Louis outlived them both. Fénelon died a few months before the king, in his sixty-fourth year, from the effects of an accident while on a journey. "*Sa physionomie,*" says St. Simon, "*rassemblait tout, et les contraires ne s'y combattaient point. Elle avait de la gravité et de la galanterie, du sérieux et de la gaieté ; elle sentait également le docteur, l'évêque et le grand seigneur. Ses manières y répondaient. Avec cela, un homme qui se mettait à la portée de chacun, sans le faire jamais sentir ; qui les mettait à l'aise et qui semblait enchanter ; de façon qu'on ne pouvait le quitter, ni s'en défendre ni ne pas chercher à le retrouver. A tout prendre, c'était un bel esprit et un grand homme.*"

One of the most interesting, and most truthful, of St. Simon's portraits of celebrated persons of the latter part of the reign of Louis XIV. is that of this highly estimable Archbishop of Cambrai.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Mademoiselle's Secret.—A Respectful Lover.—The Name on the Window-Pane.—Louis Consents to the Marriage.—“Delays are Dangerous.”—The King's Honor at Stake.—Disappointed Hopes.—Grief and Wild Despair.—The Marquis de Montespán.—La Vallière's First Flight.—The Mardi-Gras Ball.—The Rival Mistresses.—“L'Amphitryon.”

THE haughty and imperious Grande Mademoiselle has confided to the favored Count de Lauzun that her affections are given to “*un gentilhomme de la cour*.” It is, however, a secret, undivulged love, and she would have him guess the name of the fortunate individual whose exceptional merits have awakened those tender emotions that so long have lain dormant in her heart. Lauzun is, of course, greatly flattered by this mark of Mademoiselle's confidence in him ; but, alas ! he can name no one worthy of the priceless gift. Timidly, as he speaks, he raises his downcast eyes to her, as if beseeching her to spare him the pain of this cruel *badinage*. For this is not the first time, since the return from Flanders, that Mademoiselle has endeavored to draw from the gallant count a confession, not exactly amounting to a declaration of love—she would almost resent that as presumptuous—but indicating that he could a tender tale unfold, were he not awed by the height of the pinnacle of greatness that elevates her so far above him.

But Lauzun is too wary to be drawn into such a

confession. He has long and assiduously paid his court to her, with the view of insinuating himself into her affections ; but knowing her character, he has never approached her but with an air and tone of profound and severe respect, that seemed to exclude all idea of gallantry, or hope of pleasing as a lover. And he chose to appear perfectly unconscious of the fact that he did please. When Mademoiselle wished to make him understand that his attentions were agreeable to her, he gently complained that her irony distressed him. This pure and respectful attachment greatly exalted him in her opinion. She desired to reward it, and imagined—for Mademoiselle was a novice in such matters—how great would be his delight, his surprise, his joy, his gratitude, when the truth dawned upon him, that the love he dared not tell was not only divined, but reciprocated. Yet she hesitated ; for in affairs of the heart, even a queen or a grande mademoiselle would wish to lay aside dignity, and, as an ordinary woman, be asked for her love, though by one a step or two below royalty, rather than timidly offer it.

This womanly feeling made the name of Lauzun difficult to utter ; twice it died on her lips ; and again she asked him to guess. But Lauzun still affected to torture his brains in vain. Mademoiselle, determined at last by one decisive effort to tear the veil from his eyes, rose, and on a window-pane, which was conveniently covered with dust, slowly traced with her finger the name of the man she loved. Lauzun gazed upon it with ecstasy, yet as one who believed that he dreamed. After sufficient time had been given to dumb raptures—for he would not trust his tongue to tell them—he rushed towards the enraptured Made-

moiselle, and, still speechless with emotion, threw himself at her feet. She raised him, and he was permitted—happy man !—to touch the tips of her fair fingers with his lips.

Without the king's consent, there could be no publicly-acknowledged marriage. But Louis was so deeply moved by the pathetic eloquence with which love inspired his fair cousin, when on her knees she poured forth the story of her heart's struggles, her hopes, her longings, her supplications to be permitted to raise to her own rank the man to whom her affections were wholly devoted, that he unhesitatingly gave his consent. Lauzun was to become Duc de Montpensier, and to be endowed with all Mademoiselle's worldly goods, which comprised one of the largest fortunes in the kingdom—four duchies, the principality of Dombes, the Comté d'Eu, the palace of the Luxembourg, several by no means despicable etceteras, and twenty millions of *livres de rentes*. She would reserve nothing for herself, in order to show her full confidence in him.

On Monday, the 15th of December, 1670,* the marriage was publicly announced to take place at the Louvre on the following Sunday. The event was also made known to foreign courts. An earlier day had been named ; but Lauzun was not disposed to have the ceremony privately and quietly performed. He would enjoy his triumph ; M. le Duc de Montpensier must have a suitable retinue ; new carriages ; new liveries ; and be married, as he suggested, when the king attended mass in the royal chapel of the Tuiler-

* See Madame de Sévigné's letter of that date to M. de Coulanges, announcing, "*la chose la plus étonnante, la plus merveilleuse, la plus miraculeuse, la plus étourdissante,*" etc., etc., etc.

ies. Tuesday, as Madame de Sévigné informs us, "*se passa à parler, à s'étonner, à complimenter.*" On Wednesday, Mademoiselle made a gift to her *fiancé* of the estates that conferred on him the names and the titles he was described by in the marriage contract, which awaited only the king's signature. For that day M. de Lauzun was at the head of the French peerage, in virtue of his possession of the Comté d'Eu, and his vanity gratified, for the same space of time, by being addressed as M. le Duc de Montpensier. On Thursday morning it was determined that the marriage should be solemnized in the country. Delays are proverbially dangerous, and in this instance proved fatal to the hopes of both love and ambition. To delay their realization was "to tempt God and the king," as a friend observed to Mademoiselle. But she had the king's consent, at least ; and upon that she relied.

On the evening of Thursday, Mademoiselle and Lauzun were desired to attend the king at the Tuilleries. This is almost the only occasion on which we hear of the poor little timid queen's interference in any affair, either domestic or public. She was now, however, put forward and supported by the Duc d'Orleans, le Grand Condé, several of the principal nobility, and the ministers—Louvois especially—to represent to his Majesty how derogatory was such a marriage to a princess of the royal house of France ! How offensive to the princes of the blood, that this Gascon adventurer should be allowed to assume the proud name of Montpensier, and be placed on a level with them ! How mortifying to the ancient nobility, that this younger son of the obscure family of Puyguilhem (his family name) should take the *pas*

of them by being raised to the first peerage in the kingdom ! “ The king’s honor and reputation would be lowered in the sight of the world if he permitted this marriage to take place.” The king shuddered at the bare idea of the possibility of such a calamity. There was no need to urge further—he was convinced. And when Mademoiselle and Lauzun appeared, instead of the signing of the contract—to witness which they supposed they were summoned—they were informed that the king withdrew his consent, and absolutely forbade them to think of the marriage.

It must have been a trying moment for both of them. Lauzun believed that he had firmly placed his foot on the lofty height to which his ambition had pointed. But, suddenly thrust to earth again, he struggled manfully with the feelings of deep disappointment he naturally experienced when so unexpected a blow was dealt to him. He received the king’s order with firmness, but with every appearance of respect and submission. Not so la Grande Mademoiselle. She wept, she raved, and complained bitterly ; and overwhelmed her royal cousin with reproaches. On returning to the Luxembourg, she immediately went to bed, wept floods of tears, and “ would take nothing for two days but broth.” But on the following day she received visits, after the fashion of disconsolate widows—lying in state in her bed. Her *ruelle* was filled with guests, curious to see how she bore her grief, if they felt but little compassion for her. And she appears to have calmed down scarcely at all ; exhibiting, in the violent demonstration of her feelings, a vehemence resembling that of her grandmother, Marie de Médicis, and the same facility of weeping in torrents. In the wildness

of despair, she rose up in her bed, and pointing to a vacant couch in the room, she exclaimed, "*Il serait là ! il serait là !*" Her sympathizing visitors could scarcely refrain from laughter. And he would have been there, had all gone on smoothly, receiving, as was customary, the felicitations of his friends. The foreign ambassadors had now to report to their respective courts the breaking off of the marriage, and Louis, who had been generally blamed for giving his consent, was still more blamed for withdrawing it.

Having exhausted her tears and reproaches, Mademoiselle reappeared at court. And she bore herself somewhat haughtily ; but as that was not unusual with her, there was little perceptible difference in her manner. Already—so it has been asserted—she had secretly married Lauzun. But he, apparently, had behaved so well under his great disappointment, that he lost none of his favor with the king. He had a fantastic mode of showing his desire of pleasing him ; venturing on absurd actions, which often excited ridicule, and, strange to say, even envy, because royalty laughed and was amused at his conceits and originality. "*Courtisan également insolent, moqueur et bas jusqu'au valetage, et plein de recherches, d'industries, d'intrigues. de bassesses pour arriver à ses fins ; avec cela dangereux aux ministres ; à la cour redouté de tous, et plein de traits cruels et pleins de sel qui n'épargnaient personne.*" *

Lauzun's greatest enemies were the minister Louvois and Madame de Montespan. The latter was now installed in the household of the queen, having succeeded to the post held by the Countess de Soissons. M. de Montespan, having attempted to re-

* St. Simon.

move his wife from the palace, was arrested and sent to the Bastille. But as his detention there would have been an act too flagrant, even for the king to brave the scandal of, he was liberated, but ordered to leave Paris and reside on his estate. Considering his wife dead to him, M. de Montespan put on mourning, which appears to have given great offence to the king.*

Still further to increase the Grand Monarque's domestic vexations, La Vallière, unable to support the presence of so formidable a rival as De Montespan, whose increasing favor she could not fail to observe, in a moment of jealousy and despair fled to the convent of the Benedictines, at St. Cloud. No sooner was the king aware of her flight, and the place of her concealment, than he went in person to the convent and brought away his mistress. This proof of the attachment he still felt for her, if it was balm to her feelings, was gall and wormwood to her rival's. But while these two women contended for the first place in the king's favor, the queen, grieved and aggrieved, secluded herself in her oratory, and sought consolation in devotion. De Montespan had introduced her sisters to a share in the monarch's good graces, and, for the youngest and unmarried one, had obtained the post of Abbess of Fontevrault, which did not prevent her from passing the greater part of the year at court. She was witty and beauti-

* About thirty years ago a letter was found in the archives of the city of Perpignan, from the minister Louvois to the intendant Du Roussillon, desiring him to keep a vigilant eye on the Marquis de Montespan, and to lose no opportunity of annoying him and seeking his ruin.—See "Un Sermon sous Louis XIV." (page 3), par L. F. : Bungener.

ful. The dress of an abbess was probably becoming, and her religious vows not repulsively severe. The episcopal benediction was given on the 8th of February following the disappointment of Mademoiselle ; the ceremony was grand and imposing.

It was carnival-time. A masked ball was to take place at the Tuileries on Shrove Tuesday, the 18th of February. The king had ordered for the occasion a magnificent costume. La Montespan was also to shine there, and proposed to outshine her rival. But on the previous day the sensitive La Vallière again was missing, and it was ascertained that she had sought the protection of La Mère Angélique at the convent of Ste. Madeleine de Chaillot. The carnival had, on the whole, been a dreary one. Mademoiselle had not honored the *fêtes* with her presence ; the three queens had been indisposed for gaiety, and the king much annoyed by the various *contretemps* that dimmed the brilliancy of his balls and entertainments. The courtiers, who watched his countenance to regulate their own by it, had assumed a gravity more suitable to Lent, and the Mardi-Gras ball, that should have presented the gayest scene of all, brought the revelries of the court to an end in gloom. Montespan did not appear, and the king would not wear his new costume. He was anxious only for the return of Lauzun, who had been intrusted to bring back the fugitive.

And he brought her back, but disappointed and weeping that her royal lover did not, as before, fetch her himself. She perceived in it a diminution of his affection and an increase of her rival's influence. But Louis received her with tears of joy ; Madame de Montespan with tears of — “ Guess,” says Ma-

dame de Sévigné, "of what?" Well, probably tears of rage. For Madame de La Vallière no sooner reappeared, than she resumed the position for which De Montespan still was struggling, and which, equally with that of Grand Écuyer, or confessor, was a recognized one in the royal household—" *l'état de maîtresse en titre du roi.*" But, continues Sévigné, " *l'on a eu avec l'une et l'autre des conversations tendres. Tout cela est difficile à comprendre, il faut se taire.*" * Such was the complacency with which the profligacy of Louis XIV. was generally regarded; and it is evident, throughout the letters of Madame de Sévigné, that she sees nothing at all reprehensible in the immoralities of the king, so often referred to. "L'Amphitryon" of Molière, with its sparkling epigrams, was produced about this time, its object being to deride the Marquis de Montespan, and excuse or approve the vice of Louis XIV. " *C'est le génie du temps,*" observed Arnaud, " *même chez ceux qui ont le plus de lumières.*"

* An anecdote is told of a peasant, who one day meeting Madame de Montespan as she was walking in the grounds of Clagny, saluted her with most profound respect, and who, on her inquiring of him if he knew her, replied: " *Mais oui, madame; c'est vous, n'est-ce pas, qui a eu la charge de Madame de La Vallière?*"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

The King's Visit to Chantilly.—Reception at the Château.—A Stag-hunt by Moonlight.—Vatel's Distress.—Vatel's Suicide.—Confusion and Dismay.—Counting the Cost.

THE king, with a numerous retinue, is gone to visit Monsieur le Prince, le Grand Condé, at his charming retreat, the Château de Chantilly. He passes under triumphal arches of verdure in endless succession, and at every village the peasants have turned out in gala costume to greet him. The gardens and grounds of Chantilly are illuminated with lanterns of various sizes and colors, producing what imaginative writers sometimes describe as "a fairy scene," amidst which, picturesquely-costumed, fair dames and cavaliers are leisurely strolling, awaiting the advent of their Grand Monarque—the *tout-ensemble* forming a magnified picture of an elfin glen, lighted up with glow-worms and fire-flies for the reception of Oberon and Titania.

For more than a mile from the entrance to the grounds, the road is lined on either side with men bearing torches ; and soon the trampling of horses, the clanking of swords, the voices of the men, and a thick cloud of dust, announce the approach of the *avant-garde*. The king shortly follows. A signal is given, and a grand explosion of fireworks at the end of the avenue is the first greeting he receives. It is rather disconcerting to the horses, except to a few old warriors among them ; they prick up their ears and neigh exultingly, and are ready to rush into

battle. Le Grand Condé is there to receive Le Grand Louis, who graciously invites him into his coach, and together they proceed to the château.

Grands seigneurs and *grandes dames* have come from all parts of France to this *fête*, and are ready to grovel in the dust before the king to obtain but a glance from his eye. Hundreds of retainers have been splendidly got up for the occasion. They are supernumeraries who have nothing to do but to fill up the stage, and look as if they were an important part of the spectacle. And the spectacle is grand. The banqueting-room is grand; and the banquet is worthy of it, and of the guests who are to partake of the delicacies served under the superintendence of the great Vatel—" *homme d'une capacité distinguée de toutes les autres*," and the former *chef* and *maître d'hôtel* of the once celebrated Marquis de Belle Isle.

And it needs the *savoir faire* of a great man satisfactorily to provision the army the king has brought with him as a retinue, after providing for the tables of the *grande*s. For he is attended by the corps of gentlemen pensioners, one hundred in number, of whom Lauzun is captain (and the last who held that post). But all, so far, goes well; M. Vatel is satisfied. The king plays at piquet in the evening.

A *grande promenade à la mode de Versailles*; a collation beneath the spreading trees in the park, then beautiful with the verdure of spring; a stag-hunt by moonlight, and afterwards a supper, formed the programme for the following day. A brilliant display of fireworks was to have taken place when the moon went down; but for some reason, though attempted, it was not successful. Worse than all, as the result showed, the *rôti*—the *pièce de résistance*—was

wanting at two tables that evening, and Vatel was cut to the heart by it. Any incompleteness in the arrangements he regarded as a stain on his great reputation. For had not he, ten years before, presided over the vast preparations for those *fêtes* whose magnificence had roused the angry jealousy of the king? And shall it be said before the king, that Vatel, who then served that prince among men, the fascinating, the magnificent Marquis de Belle Isle, has fallen off, and is something less than his former self, now that he serves a prince of the blood? Forbid it, Heaven! Feverish anxiety had already driven sleep from Vatel's eyes for ten or twelve nights before this *contre-temps* of the *rôti* occurred. The prince hears of his distress. He goes to his room to console him. "Vatel!" he says, "the king's supper was superb." "Monseigneur, the *rôti* was wanting at two tables." "Not at all," replies the prince; "nothing could be better, everything perfect."

Vatel seeks repose, but again at break of day he is up. He has ordered fresh fish from every possible part of the coast. Only he, however, seems to care whether it is brought in or not; for both guests and attendants, worn out with fatigue, are all fast asleep. Going out, he meets a fisher-boy bringing up two loads from the coast. "Is that all?" exclaims Vatel. "All, sir," answers the boy, who knows nothing of the numerous orders elsewhere. Vatel is confounded. He cannot work a miracle, and give of these few fishes a portion to every guest. He subdues his emotion, and waits yet a little. In vain; no more fish is brought in. This second stroke of adverse fate, following so immediately upon the first, is

more than he can bear. He meets Gourville,* tells him of his disgrace, and says "he cannot survive it." Gourville treats this as a jest, and laughs at it. But Vatel is terribly in earnest. He hastens to his room, and locks himself in. Meanwhile, several loads of fish are arriving, and Vatel is sought for to give orders respecting it. As knocking and calling are unheeded, the door of his chamber is forced open by the servants, and poor Vatel in a pool of blood, his sword passed through his body, lies dead before them ! He had fixed his sword in the door and rushed upon it ; twice he was wounded but slightly, the third time it pierced his heart.

Great was the confusion and dismay this rash act of poor Vatel occasioned. Monsieur le Prince was in despair ; Monsieur le Duc wept ; and the king reproached M. le Prince. He said that for years he had deferred visiting Chantilly, because of the trouble, the inconvenience, and embarrassment he knew it would occasion ; as the prince insisted on providing for the whole of his suite. He ought only to have had two tables, and there were upwards of twenty-five—he declared that he would never allow it again. Vatel's courage was praised by some, by others he was blamed. But the praise prevailed, because generally conceded that it was "*à force d'avoir de l'honneur à sa manière*" his suicide had been committed.

* Gourville was a man of some education, who having entered the service of La Rochefoucauld as *valet-de-chambre*, displayed so much ability and wit, that he admitted him to his confidence and friendship, and so far advanced his interests that, after being on terms of intimacy also with Monsieur le Prince, he was proposed as successor to Colbert in the ministry. He, like so many other of his contemporaries, left manuscript memoirs.

Gorville, however, who seems to have been equal to any emergency, undertook to supply, for the occasion, the place of Vatel. The fish was cooked, the company dined, then promenaded, and took refreshments on the greensward, in a spot perfumed with sweet-smelling jonquils. Returning to the château they played at piquet, and considerable sums changed hands. Afterwards they supped, and, as the moon rose, they again set off to chase the deer in the park and forests of Chantilly. No further *contretemps* occurred. The weather was bright, the chase exhilarating, and all was mirth and gaiety. Before night closed in poor Vatel was forgotten, and probably, but for the pen of Sévigné, his name and fame and tragi-comic end would never have been handed down to posterity.

The next morning the king and his courtiers and numerous retinue took their departure, and M. le Prince, with Gourville, then counted the cost of the *fêtes*. They had half ruined him, as many similar entertainments had nearly ruined others. For as it was "*le génie du temps*" to exalt the king's vices into virtues, so it was *la manie du temps* to follow the course of reckless extravagance of which he set the example. And as he impoverished the State, they impoverished their families—too often leaving their heirs "*un très beau nom,*" but not a *sou* in their coffers.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Arrest of Lauzun.—From the Bastille to Pignerol.—An Uncongenial Couple.—Lauzun leaves France.—The King and the Dauphin.—The Dauphin's Preceptors.—Une Femme Savante.—The Duchess de Montausier.—"The King's Religion."—Madame Dacier's Translations.—A Famous Literary Dispute.—The Iliad of Lamothe.—A Youthful Critic.

LAUZUN flattered himself that he still retained the favor of the king, who continued to treat him with a degree of familiarity which to Louvois, even more than to others, was exceedingly mortifying. However, one evening in November 1671, as he was about to visit Madame de Montespan—who, as he professed to be a connoisseur in gems, had asked him to examine some rubies and diamonds she proposed having reset—he was arrested at the door of her apartment by Maréchal Rochefort, who was there waiting his arrival, and conveyed him to the Bastille. He was not informed of what crime he was accused, and was refused permission to write, either to the king or to Madame de Montespan. From the Bastille he was taken to Pignerol—where Fouquet had been languishing away life for the last seven years—and imprisoned in one of the lower dungeons of the fortress. It was thus the stern moralist, Louis XIV., punished the secret marriage of Lauzun with Mademoiselle.

After an imprisonment of long duration, at the solicitation of Madame de Montespan (to whose son, the Duc du Maine, Mademoiselle promised, as the

reward of her intercession, the principality of Dombes, and the Comté d'Eu, at her death) Lauzun was released and graciously permitted to thank the king. By the same eccentricities that had succeeded in former years he hoped to regain royal favor. Admitted to Louis' presence, he, with much effervescence—the bubbling over of his gratitude, probably, for his ten years' captivity—cast down his gloves and his sword at the king's feet, and stood speechless before him, as if with emotion. "*Le roi*," says Madame de La Fayette, with delicate irony, "*fit semblant de s'en moquer*." Lauzun was prohibited from appearing at court, but Mademoiselle, who vainly sought the king's recognition of her marriage, was permitted to cede to him her estates of St. Fargeau and Thiers, and to allow him, besides, an annuity of considerable amount. Lauzun complained of it as insufficient—for neither his pretensions nor his spendthrift habits had been at all moderated by captivity. Poor Mademoiselle expected to find an ardent lover in this husband for whom she had sacrificed so much. She forgot that she was fifty-four, and Lauzun some five or six years younger. She may have been a charming woman still, but happily, as most women of that age will think, all that can then be reasonably looked for of love, is, just the slightest dash of sentiment to vivify friendship between congenial souls.

But there was no congeniality between Mademoiselle and Lauzun. There had been weakness and folly on her side, ambition only on his; and now that he had nothing more to gain, he cared not even to treat her with outward respect. This heroine of the Fronde could not brook such conduct, and made no scruple of boxing his ears. He is said to have re-

sented it by returning the compliment, and at last, after a violent quarrel, she haughtily commanded him to leave her presence and never appear before her again. He obeyed, left France, and passed over to England. Mademoiselle found consolation in the society of *les gens de lettres*, and in writing her memoirs ; she rarely visited the court. Hers was one of the few hôtels at which a literary circle then regularly assembled.

The court did not give much countenance to those literary coteries. At the suggestion of Colbert, Louis had, "*pour son propre gloire*," granted pensions to several poets and men of letters, who were growing old and were generally in poverty. The literature that found most favor with him was that which took for its theme his transcendent glory, magnificence, magnanimity, heroism, and the rest of his superlative merits. And few were the poets of the time who did not—for flattery was the surest means of advancing their interests—in this way "fool him to the top of his bent." Lulli set many such charming stanzas to music ; and the king had thus the double pleasure of hearing his praises sung by others, and—as was his habit—musically murmuring them forth himself. Owing to this excessive adulation in all who approached him, he lived in a sort of fool's paradise, the only one probably he succeeded in reaching.

Like Anne of Austria, he had no taste for reading. The post of reader to the king was a sinecure. "Of what use is reading?" he said to the Maréchal de Vivonne, who was a great reader, and whose interest in works, new and old, Louis could not comprehend. Le Maréchal was a tall, stout man, with a

rather large face and florid complexion ; “ Sire,” he replied, “ reading does for the mind what you perceive good cheer has done for my cheeks.” The dauphin inherited the same incapacity for giving sustained attention to reading or study. He acknowledged, in manhood, that he had never read anything but the births and marriages in the *Gazette de France*, from the time he was freed from the control of his pastors and masters. He was, therefore, as ignorant as the king himself ; though he had had for his governor the conscientious and severely high-principled Duc de Montausier,

“ Qui pour le Pape ne dirait
Une chose qu’il ne croirait ;”

and for his preceptors such men as Bossuet, who wrote for his instruction the famous “ *Histoire Universelle* ” — which gained him more renown as a writer and historian than he had acquired as a preacher ; the eloquent Fléchier, bishop of Nismes, who also composed a volume, “ *L’Histoire de Théodore*,” for his royal pupil ; and the learned Pierre Huet, bishop of Avranches, who employed his able pen in his service on various subjects, which were treated in the form of essays.

Mademoiselle Lefebvre, afterwards the celebrated Madame Dacier, was requested by Bishop Huet to prepare and comment the ancient Latin authors, for the use of the dauphin. But all this learning and care failed to make even an ordinarily well-informed man of him. Perhaps it was a course of study too dry, too severe, for one who had naturally but little intelligence, and but limited capacity for acquiring knowledge. The king did not like him ; all his pa-

rental affection was reserved for his natural children, and the dauphin, who felt this, was constrained and ill at ease in his presence. He was overawed by the grand manners and the habitual reserve and silence (in which he imitated him) of his royal father, who kept him in servile bondage—a child in leading-strings to the end of his days.

It is probable that neither the king nor Bossuet was aware that the Latin authors prepared for the dauphin—useless though they were to him—were commented by Madame Dacier, who was of a strict Protestant family. For, some few years after, having dedicated to the king her translation of “Aurelius Victor,” with notes upon it, she could find no one who would venture to introduce her to enable her to present her book to him. This coming to the knowledge of the Duc de Montausier, he undertook to introduce her himself, and took her to court with him, for that purpose, in his own coach.

On the king being informed that Mademoiselle Lefebvre (it was just before her marriage) was in the ante-chamber, and of the object of her visit, he with an air of great resentment told the duke (himself a pervert for Julie’s sake) that he had done exceedingly wrong in extending his protection to persons of that lady’s heretical profession. He forbade the affixing of his name to any book written by a Huguenot, and gave orders that every copy of Mademoiselle Lefebvre’s work should be seized.

The duke is said to have replied : “It is thus, then, that your Majesty favors polite literature. As a king ought not to be a bigot, I shall thank the lady, in your name, for the dedication of her book, and present her with a hundred pistoles, which your Maj-

esty may pay or not pay, just as' you please." If he really did say this, he must have been a very bold man. His plainness of speech with the king was certainly notorious. But notwithstanding this, and his reputation for moral rectitude, and disdain of all the arts of a courtier, both he and Madame de Montausier—who before the appointment of the preceptor was governess to the dauphin—were accused of preventing M. de Montespan from having access to his wife, when, becoming aware of the king's designs, he would have removed her from the palace. Those who took a different view of their conduct have said that the false accusation so preyed on the mind of the duchess that it hastened her death, which occurred only a few years after that of her mother, and when the *beau monde* of Paris was laughing at M. de Montespan as "L'Amphitryon." Fléchier, whose eloquent *oraisons funébres* rivalled those of Bossuet, had been a *protégé* of the Duc de Montausier, and was chosen by him to deliver the oration on the death of the once celebrated fair Julie d'Angennes, the *belle* of the famous Hôtel de Rambouillet. It was Fléchier's *début*, and a successful one, in that branch of oratory.

But to return to Madame Dacier : *la femme savante, par excellence*, amongst French women of the 17th century. When, in 1685, the Edict of Nantes was revoked, and to escape persecution it was necessary to leave the country or abjure, she and her husband chose the latter alternative. Their sincerity was questioned ; as, naturally, was that of many others who allowed themselves to be convinced against their will ; and adopted a faith they had no faith in, in order to save themselves and their children from beggary, or from being hunted from place to place,

like wild beasts, by the infamous myrmidons of the wretched bigot, Louis XIV.

Monsieur and Madame Dacier were both writers, she being a greater classical scholar than her husband; but it was a difficulty almost insuperable, and especially at the time of the Revocation, for writers of the Protestant faith to obtain recognition of their merits, however great they might be. But when they embraced "the king's religion" all went smoothly with them, and, like Pélisson, they were at once greatly considered in society; pensions were conferred on them, and had Madame Dacier desired to dedicate another book to the king there would no longer have been any fear of its meeting with an ungracious rejection. M. Dacier was appointed *Garde des livres du Cabinet du Roi à Paris*, and madame's translations of the comedies of Plautus, Terence, and Aristophanes—their first appearance in French—were received with unbounded admiration.

She was the daughter of Tanneguy-Lefebvre, a man of great erudition, who, being accustomed to instruct his son daily in Latin and Greek, in the room where she sat at her embroidery frame, was one day surprised to find, by her secretly prompting her brother when he was at fault in his lesson, that he had instructed his daughter also. From that time she shared her brother's studies, under her father's superintendence. At a very early age she published a translation of Florus; and soon after, another of Eutrope. Anacreon, Sappho, and Homer's Iliad and Odyssey were also translated by her. Bayle gave her a very high place in literature. "*Voilà*," he wrote, "*notre sexe hautement vaincu, par cette savante.*" Ménage dedicated to her his Latin work, "*Les*

Femmes philosophes." Her contemporary, the distinguished critic, Adrien Baillet, considered Madame Dacier's notes and comments on the ancient Greek and Latin authors most valuable ; being both judicious and erudite. Voltaire also speaks of her as a prodigy of learning. "*Nulle femme,*" he says, "*n'a jamais rendu plus de services aux lettres. Ses traductions de Térence et d'Homère lui font un honneur immortel.*"

In the famous literary dispute on the respective merits of the ancient and modern authors, Madame Dacier declared for the former, and replied with considerable warmth to Lamothe, whose opinion was in favor of the moderns. She defended with ardor the gods that Homer had sung, regarding the criticisms of her opponent as little less than blasphemies. "Homer," said Lamothe, "calls Jupiter the father of the gods. Yet he is not the father of Saturn, of Cybele, of Juno, of the nymphs who tended him in infancy, or of Mars, Ceres, Vesta, or Flora. Neither is he the father of the giants, nor of men. Again, Homer relates that Jupiter drove discord out of heaven ; how is it, then, that the gods are incessantly wrangling?"

Lamothe had given high praise to the works of Madame Dacier, and had addressed an ode to her on her translation of the Odes of Anacreon. But she disregarded his compliments, and in her enthusiasm for Homer characterized the remarks of the critic as "frigid, dull, ridiculous, and impertinent ; displaying gross ignorance, overweening vanity, and a want of common sense." In conclusion, she related an anecdote of "Alcibiades, whose indignation was so roused on being told by an orator that he had not the works of Homer, that he rose and struck him. What would he be moved to do now," continued the learned lady

in the heat of her excitement, "to an orator who ventured to read to him the Iliad of M. de Lamothe?"* To this Lamothe calmly replied, "it was fortunate for him that when he recited some part of his verses to Madame Dacier, this act of Alcibiades did not then occur to her." He, however, retracted none of the praise he had bestowed on her works, but spoke with admiration of her great talents, when he afterwards published "*Réflexions sur la critique.*"

Monsieur and Madame Dacier had studied Greek and Latin together. He had been her father's pupil, and the similarity of their tastes as students led to their falling in love. His admiration of the Greek and Latin poets was as enthusiastic as hers; but though his works were valued by the learned for their research, they were not so generally esteemed as the translations of Madame Dacier. She died in 1720, at the age of sixty-eight. Her husband was of the same age; nevertheless, he was desirous of taking a second wife, and proposed to Mademoiselle de Launay (Madame de Staal), who thought him rather too old. He died in 1722.

They had two daughters, one of whom took the veil, and a son, who died at the age of eleven. This boy gave promise of becoming as distinguished a Greek and Latin scholar as his mother. It was supposed also that a few more years would have developed his possession of great critical powers, as, at the age of nine, he had pronounced, as his own opinion, that "*Hérodote était un grand enchanteur, et Polybe un homme de grand sens.*"

* Lamothe, who was not a Greek scholar, had put the Iliad into verse from a prose translation, and had added notes and reflections, which the learned Madame Dacier disapproved of as misleading and incorrect.

CHAPTER L.

The Camp at Chalons.—Going to the Wars.—“Vive Henri IV.”—Death of Charles Paris.—Lamentation and Woe.—“Les Solitaires” of Port-Royal.—The King Returns to France.—The Dutch Reject Peace.

THE king had visited the grand camp at Chalons, and reviewed the troops assembled there—an imposing military spectacle, at which the three queens had assisted. A hundred thousand men were under arms, and war was declared against the Dutch. The nobles were borrowing; mortgaging, or selling their estates; or by some other expedient attempting to raise money to provide the extravagant equipment necessary for appearing with *éclat*, more important than valor, at this war. The king and his staff were to fare sumptuously every day, and court etiquette was to be strictly observed.

All ruffles and ribands, perfumes and wig, the royal warrior steals off from St. Germain on an earlier day than he had appointed, in order to avoid the tearful *adieux* of La Vallière and the queen. Montepan, less loving, therefore more lively and amusing, awaits him at Nanteuil, with the rest of the paraphernalia of war. The new gold and silver embroideries of the courtiers forming his numerous staff shine with a brilliancy that rivals the sun at noonday. These courtiers surround his carriage—for Louis no longer rides to the scene of action. His Guards, also

a dazzling host, follow ; and his retinue of attendants, scarcely less bedizened, brings up the rear.

How different this formal pageant, with which the great Louis went forth to look at a battle, from the dashing and devil-may-care manner of Henry IV.'s setting out, in his best days, to fight one. He encumbered himself with no long curly wigs, no satins and laces, silk stockings or red-heeled shoes. But arrayed in a grey woollen suit—usually something the worse for wear—booted and spurred in military fashion, and with a dingy white plume in his grey felt hat, he, without more ado, vaulted into his saddle. Gallantly he waved his *adieux* to “the girl he left behind him”—his “*Charmante Gabrielle*”—and rode jauntily forth at the head of his troops, who enlivened their march with many a song. And as often as not, you might have heard the gay ditty—

“Vive Henri quatre,
Vive ce roi vaillant,
Ce diable à quatre
Qui a le double talent,
De boire et de battre
Et d’être vert-galant.”

If there was nothing remarkably estimable in this, it was, at least, more manly than the ostentatious show of his selfish and degenerate grandson.

The details of the raid on Holland are of course not to be looked for in these pages. It may, however, be mentioned that several of the younger nobility of France lost their lives during the passage of the Rhine—attempted after the French had laid waste many a fair province, and had been guilty of revolting crimes in the towns surrendered to them. The Dutch were unprepared for war, and were always less formidable on land than on the sea.

Amongst the slain was the young Duc de Longueville—Charles Paris, born at the Hôtel de Ville during the Fronde. He, in fact, was the cause of the carnage that ensued. The Rhine, where it was shallow, was partly forded, and partly traversed in boats. The townspeople fled ; the few troops encountered on landing demanded quarter ; but Longueville, rash, inexperienced, and heated with wine, cried out, "*Point de quartier pour cette canaille,*" and, at the same time, fired on their officer and killed him. The men, who had been ready to lay down their arms, roused by this act, took courage, and fired on Longueville and his companions. The young duke fell dead, also the Chevalier de Marsillac, the brother of La Rochefoucauld. The Prince de Marsillac, the son of the latter, was wounded ; also the Comte de Guiche, the son of Maréchal de Grammont. Monsieur le Prince was mounting his horse at the time ; a Dutch officer, observing this, rushed forward and aimed at him with a pistol ; the prince struck it down, the man missed his aim, and the prince broke his wrist—the only hurt he ever received, throughout the whole of his campaigns.

The skirmish was short and sanguinary. The Dutch, while it lasted, dealt many a telling blow. But soon none were left to continue the fight. Martinet then threw a bridge of boats (his invention) across the river, and Louis walked over it as a conquering hero.

But great was the lamentation in Paris. When the news of her son's death was communicated to Madame de Longueville, she fainted away, exclaiming, "Ah ! my dear son ! my dear son !" Convulsions followed, interrupted by stifled cries, sobs, and ap-

peals to heaven. So great was her agony, that those who witnessed it "were tempted to wish that death would mercifully end her sufferings." "And there is a man," writes Sévigné, "whose grief is scarcely less than hers. I fancy, if they had met, and met alone in the first moments of their anguish, all other feelings would have given place to this grief; and they would have lamented and wept together over their common calamity." That man was La Rochefoucauld. He was inconsolable, it appears; though he strove to dissemble his sorrow for the fate of his unacknowledged natural son.

Madame de Longueville's second son had ceded his title and other rights to his brother, but on his death claimed them again. The duchess supported his claims, and he was legally reinstated in the position he had renounced. After this event she built herself a suite of rooms within the precincts of Port-Royal les Champs; following the example of her friend, Madame de Sablé, who had won her over to Jansenism, and had given many fair penitents to Port-Royal de Paris. Madame de Longueville had long before withdrawn from the court; but now—though without taking the veil—her retirement became stricter, her penance more severe. Sometimes at the convent of the Carmelites, sometimes in the damp, dreary retreat of Port-Royal les Champs, she would, for weeks together, sleep on the bare ground, wear sackcloth and horsehair, and an iron band round her waist. In the intervals, "les solitaires," as they were termed, of Port-Royal—Arnauld, Le Maître, Saci, Nicole, and several others, men of great reputation for learning, eloquence, and personal merit—assembled in her apartments to

read, or to discourse on subjects having reference to Jansenism. The ardent temperament of the Duchess de Longueville led her to enter with great warmth into the disputes which so long disquieted the Pope, the King, and the Jesuits, on the vexed question of Jansenism. Many of the most distinguished of the literati inclined to its doctrines, which appear to have been a modification of those of Calvin. They were, therefore, obnoxious to the king, who was resolved to extirpate them, though he really knew nothing of Jansenism, except that, being stigmatized as heterodoxy, it was not his religion.

But at this particular juncture it is martial ardor that fires his breast. Having crossed the Rhine, and his troops having installed themselves in several forsaken towns (the Dutch in the beginning of the war had an idea of flooding the country, and emigrating to Batavia), he thinks it well to return to France. Turenne and his generals are left to take possession of Amsterdam, while he receives the tribute due to his heroism, in the acclamations of his people, laurel wreaths, and the complimentary verses of the court poets ; such as :

“ Nous verrons toute la terre
Assujettie à ses lois ;
Pour l’amour ou pour la guerre,
Dès qu’il daigne faire une choix,
Un Dieu lui prête son tonnerre
Un autre Dieu son carquois.”

Triumphal arches, columns and statues were ordered to be erected to commemorate the king's series of conquests in Holland. But before they were completed the conquests had to be abandoned. The Dutch had opened the sluices and inundated the

country ; they had made Prince William of Orange, then in his twenty-second year, their stadt-holder ; they had refused the peace offered by France ; and in Amsterdam, as in a fortress amidst rolling waters, they hold out against the French troops—under famine and all the miseries of war.

But Ruyter has scattered the English and French fleets, and brings relief to his country by sea. Charles, too, has been forced to withdraw from his alliance with France, and Europe is arming against the Grand Monarque ; who, instead of shouting " Victoria !" is compelled to abate his pretensions.

CHAPTER LI.

Louis XIV. and La Vallière.—The Favorite and the Queen.—
Mdme. Scarron at Vaugirard.—La Vallière's Third Flight.—
Pious Austerities.—An Audacious Priest.—Bourdaloue.—A
Courtly Preacher.—A Lenten Sermon.—The King's Conde-
scension.—Père La Chaise.—The Peripatetics of Versailles.—
La Bruyère.—Pélisson's Conversion.

It is difficult to understand why the commonplace *amours* of Louis XIV. and La Vallière should have been so idealized that she, above all his mistresses, is usually exalted as a saint. For ten years she lived very contentedly in the royal palaces, without any uncomfortable awakening of conscience, or thought for the queen. Maria Theresa wanted spirit and animation, but she had much affection for her unworthy husband. And doubtless she had far greater reason, as well as greater right, to feel both grieved and insulted by his flagrant infidelities, than had La Vallière when supplanted in her post of first mistress. She did, indeed, endeavor, for a time, to follow the example the queen so long set her, of uncomplainingly tolerating the presence of a favored rival placed above her. But not having the same power of resignation to circumstances, she sought to recover her influence by an abrupt departure from the court. And it was a triumph very gratifying to a jealous woman's feelings when Louis, in person, brought her away from the convent.

Her want of sincerity, in the step she had taken,

was evident from her disappointment when next year she had recourse to the same expedient. "Alas!" she exclaimed, on seeing only Lauzun, "the king came in person to remove me from the Benedictines; now he deposes another to take me back to him." But for three years after this she remained at the court; tearful and sorrowful, a mere foil to the lively, witty, and sarcastic De Montespan, who then reigned supreme over her royal lover, and was treated *en reine*—receiving far more attention and homage than the timid, retiring Maria Theresa.

Often, when the courtiers were assembled in the great gallery of Versailles, promenading and conversing, while the ladies of the court, sitting in groups, were chatting familiarly together, suddenly, every voice would be hushed, the ladies rise from their seats, the men bow low, and with downcast eyes stand immovable. The haughty Marquise de Montespan appears, and followed by twenty or more ladies, with stately step, slowly traverses the gallery. Presently, another lady leaves the royal apartments; three or four others following. If the company in the gallery should chance to be seated, they rise and salute her, as, with an air of gentleness and modesty, she passes them; but they assume no cringing attitudes, and scarcely for a moment interrupt their conversation. "It is only the queen."

Clagny and Trianon are built, and Madame Scarron, who prospers as the influence of the reigning favorite increases, now resides in a remote part of the Faubourg St. Germain, near the village of Vaugirard, then quite in the country. She is nurse to the "royal children," and inhabits a large, handsome house, of which few have the privilege of the *entrée*. The apart-

ments are spacious and elegant, and the house has fine gardens. Madame Scarron has her carriage, several horses, and a suitable staff of servants. She dresses magnificently, but in perfect taste ; as one accustomed to live in the society of people of distinction. She has charmingly easy manners, is considered amiable and pleasing, and her conversation lively and agreeable. Madame Scarron is well *en train*, by-and-by to avenge Madame de La Vallière. And possibly some such vision may have already begun, mentally, to open before her.

La Vallière's third flight is a final one—such men as Louis XIV. are not subdued by tears and the air of a victim. All hope of regaining her position being at an end, she begins, after fourteen years of blindness, to see that she has wronged the queen. She confesses herself guilty, and asks pardon before the court. The poor little queen—a neglected wife—is affected by the sorrows of the forsaken mistress. Bossuet fortifies the penitent in her resolution, and she enters on her noviciate in the Carmelite convent of the Rue St. Jacques. L'Abbé de Fromentière, a distinguished preacher, delivers a discourse on the occasion ; the text, " I have found my sheep which was lost," etc. The following year, on making her profession, Bossuet is the orator. The queen is present, the court, and the *beau monde* of Paris. Bossuet is not "*aussi divin qu'on l'espérait*," Sévigné informs us. No word is uttered having reference to the past life of the penitent, or to the cause of her retreat from the world. "*Un jésuite adoucit tout*," says le Père André. To allude to it would be to cast some reflection on the king, tarnishing the brightness of his glory, wounding his nice sense of honor.

Madame de La Vallière lived thirty-five years in the Carmelite convent, making atonement for her errors by the usual superstitious practices then, perhaps still, in vogue—practices that remind one of the customs of savage tribes for propitiating the evil spirit when anything goes amiss with them. Scratching and wounding her flesh, sleeping on the damp ground, walking barefoot, and, it is said, abstaining for a whole year from drinking water or any kind of liquid—which seems impossible—were some of the pious austerities by which the saintly Sœur Louise de la Miséricorde worked out her salvation. The death of her son, at the age of sixteen, seems not to have affected her ; and she took no interest in her daughter, afterwards Princess de Conti, who often visited her, and desired to show the poor recluse the respect and affection due to a mother.

A short time before Madame de La Vallière took the veil, an effort was made to dethrone De Montespan also. Her confessor having refused her absolution, she complained to the king, who was overwhelmed with astonishment and indignation at the audacity of the “obscure priest,” and sought the opinion of Bossuet on the subject. The great orator *ventured*—for the most zealous ministers of God feared far more to offend their earthly sovereign than their heavenly one—to approve the refusal of the “obscure priest,” and to point out to the king the sinfulness of his conduct in setting an example that gave occasion for such scandal. He even urged him to prohibit Madame de Montespan from again appearing at court ; but Louis was not then prepared for so decisive a step—Madame Scarron was not yet the pious Madame de Maintenon.

Bourdaloue preached the Lenten sermons that year at Versailles. Bossuet, except in funeral orations, or on special occasions similar to that of La Vallière's profession as a nun, was no longer heard in the pulpit. His fame as a writer had eclipsed his fame as a preacher, and Bourdaloue, Mascaron, and Fléchier now held the first rank as pulpit orators. The greatest, perhaps, was Bourdaloue—his style, grand and powerful, lending force to those arguments by which he sought to convince the understanding and to speak to the conscience. He disdained to appeal to the feelings, or to excite the temporary emotion that so often draws tears from an audience ; so that he was rarely touching, rarely persuasive, but always convincing. Sévigné relates that, when he was once preaching to a profoundly silent but crowded and fashionable congregation at Notre Dame, the old Maréchal de Grammont—whose attention had become entirely absorbed by Bourdaloue's arguments—forgetting that he was in church, suddenly exclaimed, with great emphasis, as he struck his cane on the floor, "*Mordieu ! il a raison.*" This startling interruption disconcerted the preacher, and created so much confusion amongst the congregation—of whom as many were disposed to laugh as to be annoyed—that the remaining part of the sermon was but imperfectly attended to.

It was, however, the custom even with Bourdaloue too often to follow the stream ; and if he did not actually flatter the king in his sermons, to leave him a side-door open through which to escape from the crowd of miserable sinners—being consoled when he came to his peroration to find that he was not obliged to include that demigod amongst them. But on the

particular Good Friday before alluded to, Bourdaloue was to strive to "catch the conscience of the king." The king had once, on the conclusion of a sermon, said to a preacher who had been so bold as to depict a sinner in which he was compelled to recognize his own portrait : "*Mon père, je veux bien prendre mon part dans un sermon, mais je n'aime pas qu'on me le fasse.*" Of course he never again allowed him the opportunity. He disliked, too, to hear that death was no respecter of persons ; that the king of terrors stayed not his hand either for dignities or wealth. "*Nous mourrons tous—tous,*" said a preacher one day—preaching before Louis XIV. A movement of the king, sudden and involuntary, reminded him that he had touched on a theme displeasing to royalty. In his dismay and confusion he humbly qualified the force of the assertion by an apologetic "*Oui, sire—presque tous.*"

'Tis true that Bourdaloue—whose genial temper and high personal merits caused him to be as much courted and sought after in the society of the wealthy and great as he was generally admired for his eloquence in the pulpit—could venture to utter bolder truths in the presence of the king than those poor preachers, who—if the anecdotes be true—must have been either inexperienced or obscure. "*L'Evêque de Meaux (Bossuet) et le Père Bourdaloue,*" says La Bruyère, "*me rappellent Démosthène et Cicéron.*" And Bourdaloue appears in this Good Friday discourse to have struck terror into the hearts of the brilliant throng that crowded the chapel of Versailles (the men in the picturesque full dress of the period ; the ladies also magnificently attired, but, as was customary on church festivals, in colors more subdued). But their terror is for the preacher. They watch the

king's countenance ; it gives no sign of inward perturbation. Yet it may be the last time that the voice of the great Bourdaloue will be heard in that gilded temple ! Who can tell ? The preacher himself is astonished at his own daring. Though Louis is pleased to hear others castigated, rarely indeed does the great king apply what he hears to himself. The barrier the preacher is accustomed to set up between him and the rest of the world is, however, wanting on this occasion—but the sermon is ended.

It is usual with the king to pass from his chapel through a small adjoining apartment, where he remains for a few minutes, when satisfied with the sermon, to compliment the preacher. Thither Bourdaloue is summoned. The crowd of servile courtiers dare not raise their eyes until the king has given the signal for approval or displeasure. Contrary to all expectation, it is approval. “ I thank you for your sermon, mon père,” he says to Bourdaloue. The priest, who is a man of commanding presence, bows in acknowledgment of his Majesty's condescension. “ You have done your duty,” continues the king. “ I am not displeased ; it was an excellent and eloquent discourse.”

It did not, however, induce him, as was especially the object of both Bossuet and Bourdaloue, to refrain, until he had banished Madame de Montespan from the court, from confessing and receiving absolution himself. It should of course have been denied equally to him as to his mistress.* His Jesuit con-

* At Pentecost both went comfortably through their devotions without let or hindrance from scrupulous confessor or preacher. Madame de Sévigné, who records this fact, and who may be said to represent the moral side of the society of that period, adds :

fessor, the Père La Chaise (whose vast garden at Menilmontant, now the famous cemetery, was presented to him by the king, planted with choice flowers, which he was fond of cultivating), really had some scruples of conscience concerning it ; conciliatory though he was, and a lover of ease, and in his mode of life more of a *bon vivant* than a priest. After the penitential period of Lent—when the king made a very clean breast of it—the holy father was accustomed to feign illness, to lie in bed and undergo a slight bleeding ; the royal penitent sending many times daily to inquire after the state of his health. But he was always too much weakened by the severity of the attack to attend him, when this alarmingly heavy burden of sins had to be removed. A Jesuit priest, in whom he placed great confidence, was therefore deputed to perform the onerous duty for him, and was of course only too glad to have the opportunity of absolving the Grand Monarque. The Père La Chaise has been aptly described as “ *un singulier mélange de ruse et de bonté, de circonspection et de franchise.*” Of his office of confessor to the king he himself said : “ *Bon Dieu ! quel rôle !*”

“ *Sa vie (De Montespan's) est exemplaire ; elle s'occupe de ses ouvriers (at Clagny) ; elle va à St. Cloud où elle joue à Hoca*”—a game of hazard at which many of the courtiers ruined themselves to please the king. At St. Cloud presided Madame, second wife of the Duc d'Orleans, and daughter of the Prince Palatine. She was as ugly as she was *spirituelle et maligne*. She said, when she had to abjure Lutheranism on her marriage with Monsieur, that “ on her arrival in Paris three bishops were appointed to confer with her on the subject of religion, and to instruct her in her new faith ; but as she found that they differed widely from each other in points of belief, she took from each the quintessence of his creed, and formed them into a religion for herself.”

Bossuet, as preceptor to the dauphin, had his apartment in the palace. He and the learned ecclesiastics of his intimate society were familiarly designated by the court "*Les philosophes.*" For he had introduced the custom of selecting some special subject for conversation and discussion in the daily walks he and his friends were accustomed to take in a retired avenue in the grounds of Versailles. Learned abbés, preachers, and bishops, as their several inclinations or special studies led them, named a theme—historical, theological, metaphysical, etc.—upon which each expressed his opinion or ideas. These philosophical promenades continued for many years at Versailles and elsewhere, and formed for some time an exclusive literary society. Afterwards, men of letters who were not ecclesiastics were permitted to join it; but as its discussions retained, more or less, a serious tone, and were often of a purely religious character, when the king became devout much eagerness was evinced, by zealous courtiers, to be numbered amongst the philosophers.

Racine was a member, also La Bruyère, who, at Bossuet's suggestion, had been selected to reside, in quality of *homme de lettres*, with Monsieur le Duc—the grandson of the great Condé—to instruct him in history. La Bruyère was a philosopher of a very genial school; a man of great suavity of temper, fond of society, of which he was a keen observer, and distinguished for wit and polished manners. "*Les Caractères,*" one of the *chefs d'œuvre* of the seventeenth century, obtained for its author the honor of an academical *fautuil*. It has been said that it would have obtained for many men of that time a sojourn in the Bastille—so vivid are the portraits, so

keenly incisive is the satire—but that, like Boileau, La Bruyère did not attack the king. He held the post of *gentilhomme de la chambre du roi*, and the king had a great esteem for him. “*Télémaque*” and “*Les Caractères*,” the two most original works of that period, have been those the most frequently imitated and with the least success.

Péllisson was also of the philosophers, though little esteemed by them. His talents were undoubted, and his defence of Fouquet had secured him general admiration. But his abjuration of Protestantism, like that of Turenne, was by both Catholics and Huguenots regarded as insincere. “*Dieu lui avait fait la grande grace*,” as Fénelon said, “to open his eyes at the precise moment when it was most to his worldly interest to be converted.” No more active agent was employed against the Protestants than the Calvinist Péllisson, and none reaped more solid rewards for zealous persecution of them than he. Gold and lucrative sinecures were showered upon him, under whose genial influence grew brilliant flowers of rhetoric, which he employed for the ornamentation of peans in honor of the king. Even by the servile herd of courtiers, Péllisson’s flattery was regarded as mean and base. And, in a discourse delivered at the French Academy, Louis himself was embarrassed by it. One may, therefore, safely conclude that the force of adulatory eloquence could no further go. The only voice then unfalteringly raised in praise of Péllisson was that of his old friend Madeleine de Scudéry. She, like a true woman, could both lament the downfall of poor imprisoned Fouquet, and rejoice at the elevation of his renegade friend, of whose sincerity in changing his faith nothing could shake her conviction.

CHAPTER LII.

Death of Turenne and Retirement of Condé.—Funeral Orations.—La Belle Fontanges.—Marriage of the Dauphin.—La Dame d'Honneur.—Poetry and Piety.—La Fontaine.—The Soldier-Prince.—Death of La Belle Duchesse.—The Tuileries Forsaken.—Poisonings and Magic.—Marriage of Mdme. de Maintenon.

SHORTLY after the death of Maréchal Turenne—who was shot through the heart while choosing, with General St. Hilaire, the position for a battery near the village of Saltzbach, the same ball carrying away the general's right arm—the great Condé retired from active service. He suffered much from gout, was also a little jealous of younger military men, and particularly impatient of the interference of Louvois and the king—the latter nominal commander-in-chief of the armies. The balls, masquerades, and entertainments of the Tuileries, Fontainebleau, and Versailles, had possessed but little attraction for him even in the days of his impetuous youth. Now, he very rarely visited the court, preferring the retirement of his charming Château of Chantilly and the society and conversation of men of genius and learning, of scientific pursuits, or celebrity in the arts. He had always been an encourager and patron of literature, and was himself an intelligent amateur in some branches of science.

Turenne, like most of the distinguished men who took part in the great events of the century, left MS. Memoirs, which, as Voltaire observes, are

not in the style of those of Xenophon and Cæsar ; but the great soldier's chequered career, his conversion, and tragic death, supplied a fine subject for the display of Bossuet's great oratorical powers ; and his treatment of it was grand and dramatic. Fléchier's oration on the same occasion was also considered a *chef-d'œuvre* of its kind. France had lost her two greatest generals ; still the war went on. Another campaign, however, was followed by the peace of Nimègue. While peace was being signed, William of Orange, Louis' inveterate foe, gained a victory at Mons over the Maréchal Duc de Luxembourg, and Louvois and Louis continued to ravage the German States. Strasbourg was surprised and taken ; the consternation and despair of the inhabitants at falling under the despotic rule of France being as great as when, two hundred years after, torn from France, they fell under the despotism of Germany. The Hôtel de Ville of Paris conferred on the king, at this time, the surname of "*Le Grand*," and struck several medals commemorative of the event.

But while his generals were carrying fire and sword through the small German towns and inflicting cruelties on their helpless inhabitants, Louis was gradually becoming pious. The star of De Montespan was rapidly declining, that of De Maintenon steadily rising. The children and their *gouvernante* now lived in the palace, and De Montespan soon began to detect a rival in her perfidious *protégée* and friend. Quarrels ensued between them ; the king interfered, and endeavored to appease the jealousy of one, and to soothe the wounded feelings of the other. Notwithstanding, "*on parlait de changement d'amour*," "*La belle Fontanges*" had begun her short reign, and

was already Madame la Duchesse, with a pension of twenty thousand *écus*. She had received in bed, as was the custom, the congratulations of the court. The king himself had publicly complimented her on the further honor conferred on her sister, whom he had made Abbess of Chelles. De Montespan, though greatly enraged at the "*prospérité*," as Sévigné calls it, of la belle Fontanges, was cut to the heart at the far more dangerous ascendancy which the cleverer and more wily, though less young and beautiful, rival, was acquiring over the mind of the king.

Madame de Maintenon was soon after named *dame d'honneur* to the Princess of Bavaria, an alarmingly ugly but *spirituelle* young lady, just married (1680) to the dauphin, who was then nineteen. M. de Sanguin, one of the gentlemen of the court appointed to escort the princess to France, wrote to the king, by way of warning of the shock he might otherwise receive: "*Sire, sauvez le premier coup d'œil.*" The dauphine, conscious of her extreme plainness, and of the want of those airs and graces which alone found favor in the profligate court of Louis XIV., led a life of great retirement. The dauphin, however, was much attached to her. She was so good and so clever, and had so much pleasing expression, that, after the first shock, her want of beauty was forgotten. The king, too, took some pleasure in her society, and spent in her apartments the hours he had been accustomed to pass with the haughty marquise. As *la dame d'honneur* was also there, it led to "*une infinité de conversations agréables*," in which he daily discovered a greater charm, as well as new attractions, in the lady he had once thought but slightly of. Maria Theresa, who had also a liking

for her daughter-in-law, complained that Madame de Maintenon kept them apart. This was a new cause of grief, but she yielded to the queen ; and she had her reward : "*l'homme le plus aimable de son royaume*" chatted with her in her own apartment. He cared not to put any restraint on the gossip of the poor little queen, who never appeared before him without involuntarily trembling. In the course of these interesting *tête-à-tête* conferences the king was first made to doubt of the safety of his soul ; and for hours together he listened attentively to his fair preacher.

Roederer considers that the death of Molière, in 1673, contributed to bring about the change in the mind and character of the king, in the period between 1675 and 1680, and to confirm the ascendancy which the example of those persons who preserved the moral traditions of the Hôtel de Rambouillet had begun to acquire. "During Molière's career," he says, "*les lettres* had sanctioned and protected the licentiousness of the court against the *société d'élite* ; but as the manners of the court underwent a change, the poets perceived that the time had arrived to adopt another tone. The gross expressions so favored, so cherished, by Molière, are not to be found in the works of his successors of the *Théâtre français*. Neither in Regnard, nor even in the plays of Dancourt. Not a trace of them in La Bruyère, who, more diversified than Molière, wrote in every tone, and depicted a greater variety of characters." The muse of Racine, so tender, so passionately loving, became pious. He and Duché began to vie with each other in composing plays on Biblical subjects. Corneille, whose last tragedy, "*Suréna*," was pro-

duced in 1680, translated, the next year, "L'Imitation de Jésus Christ." Bensérade translated hymns for the "*livre d'heures*" of the king. Quinault wrote :

" Je n'ai que trop chanter les jeux et les amours,
Sur un ton plus sublime il faut me faire entendre ;
Je vous dis adieu, Muse tendre,
Et vous dis adieu pour toujours."

After this we have no more flowing lyrics from the pen of Quinault. Instead of from love, with its pains and its pleasures, he sought inspiration from the vile deeds of *Les Dragons* ; and chanted "*les dragonnades*" under the title of "L'Hérésie détruite." Only La Fontaine continued to address his licentious verses to certain *grandes dames* and *grands seigneurs* of the "*Société Italienne*." But the time was approaching when he, also, had to impose some restraint on the freedom of his muse ; though La Fontaine sought for no favors from the court, and was content to linger on in poverty, after his patroness, Madame de la Sablière—in whose house he had lived twenty years—tired of the world, or the world tired of her, went into a convent to make an edifying end to a life of "*belle galanterie*," as it was termed. "All's well that ends well," was the general motto of those "*belles dames galantes*." It was Madame de la Sablière who said to her *protégé*, "*Mon bon ami La Fontaine, que vous seriez bête si vous n'aviez pas tant d'esprit*." For though so full of gaiety and sprightliness in his writings, he was dreary beyond endurance in conversation, and inclined to be moody and melancholy.

Having married the dauphin, the king began to establish the rest of his family, and Mademoiselle de Blois, La Vallière's daughter, at the age of fourteen, became, by royal command—for the bridegroom was

an unwilling one, and the Grand Condé exceedingly mortified—the wife of the Prince de Conti. The soldier-prince, compelled to appear at the marriage of his nephew, being appealed to *à l'improviste*, was induced to have his venerable beard shaven off. Beards were not then fashionable at court ; but the habits of Condé, as regarded toilet and fashion, were not unlike those of Henry IV.; when he put off his sword he made himself comfortable in a plain and easy-fitting suit ; and he cherished his beard, but would not condescend to a wig. His valet, taking advantage of his having undergone, in honor of the marriage, the operation of shaving, proceeded to dress, to pomade, and to powder his hair, of which he seems to have had an abundant crop. The woman-kind of his establishment prepared for him a new close coat of rich brown satin, with large diamond buttons, which, with a diamond-hilted sword, completed his wedding suit. His *coiffure au naturel* excited the envy of the court. The long wigs, reaching half-way to the knees, looked ridiculous, we learn, by the side of Condé's "*belle tête*."

But the Grand Condé was then but a wreck of his former self ; the fiery spirit of his youth had burnt out, and at fifty-nine he was already an aged man. His only sister, the celebrated Duchess de Longueville, died in the preceding year. Her beauty, and her extreme piety—for she, too, had injured her health and hastened her death by those wretched practices supposed to be gratifying to the Deity, and to atone for sin—being made the subject of great laudation in the funeral panegyric. The prince had been greatly affected at her death. How many painful remembrances it awakened, as well of his own

brilliant youth as of hers ! La Rochefoucauld also was dead ; a very short interval occurring between his death and that of the duchess. Madame de La Fayette was inconsolable, and secluded herself from society. Between her and La Rochefoucauld had long subsisted one of those sentimental attachments, or friendships, which not unfrequently occur in France in the latter part of life between persons of opposite sexes, but an instance of which is of rare occurrence in England. There is something of the *romanesque* in the idea, which to most English minds would, in middle age, be the equivalent of ridiculous. " Old friends and old wine," says an illustrious English sage, " as many of the first and as much of the latter as you please, but no old women." It follows, then, that old friendships in England can exist only amongst old men. Poor old women ! why not all emigrate to France for the chance of the solace of an old friend of the sterner sex ?

When death sundered the bonds of friendship between La Rochefoucauld and Madame de La Fayette, two literary *salons* were closed ; and when the same ruthless destroyer, in 1683, made Louis XIV. a disconsolate widower, he put an end also to the court of the Tuileries. From that time the king held his court permanently at Versailles, with occasional excursions to Fontainebleau and Marly. The Hôtels de Nevers, de Bouillon, de Soissons, and one or two others of the dissolute Italian school of morals, still flourished. But Bourdaloue having denounced " *les mœurs Italiennes*" in a Christmas-day sermon preached before the king, several young courtiers who frequented those *salons* were banished to their estates for a time. This, together with the

absurd charges made against Mesdames de Soissons, de Bouillon, and de Tingry, and even against the Maréchal Duc de Luxembourg, of being implicated with the infamous Voisin and her companions, who were burnt on the Place de la Grève, in dealings with the devil, by means of incantations, enchantments, poisonings, and the arts of magic generally—showing how much of ignorance and barbarism yet lurked under the social varnish of politeness and refinement of speech—brought discredit on the Italian *réunions*, and closed more than one of those *salons*.

Madame de Fontanges and the queen being dead ; de Montespan banished from the court ; and the dauphine in ill-health, passing all her time in her apartment, the office of comforter to the king in his affliction devolved solely on Madame de Maintenon. Her anxiety to save his soul increased, as her opportunities increased to bring about that good work. "*Peut-être,*" she wrote, "*il n'est pas si éloigné de penser à son salut que sa cour le croit. Il a des retours fréquents vers Dieu. Il serait bien triste que Dieu n'éclairât pas une âme faite pour lui.*"

And Heaven did kindly enlighten this erring soul ; made him zealous also to save the souls of others ; and, as a first step in the thorny path of piety, some time between 1685 and 1686, he married Madame de Maintenon, in the dead of the night, in the chapel of Versailles. Though the date is variously given, yet that the marriage (in proof of which no state document or writing of any kind is known to exist) took place, has never been doubted.

CHAPTER LIII.

Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.—Petitot, the Enamel Painter.—His Escape to Geneva.—Bordier.—Vandyke.—Petitot and Bordier in Paris.—Portrait of Jean Sobieski.—Destruction of Works of Art.—Petitot's Chef-d'Œuvre.

SHORTLY before, or after, that most inauspicious event, the marriage of Louis XIV. with Madame de Maintenon, took place, the king determined on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. It proved a national calamity—many of the misfortunes that weighed so heavily on France in the latter part of the king's reign having resulted from that highly-impolitic step.

At that time the celebrated enamel painter, the Chevalier Jean Petitot, lived in the Rue de l'Université, in a handsome residence facing the Hôtel Tambonneau. There, for many years, he had received the visits of the court, and of the most distinguished people in Europe, all eager to possess one of his precious gems of art. He was then seventy-eight years of age, but still worked unremittingly, and without any diminution of skill or of finish in his productions. In all of them he took the highest interest, executing them *con amore*. Doubtless, to this intense love of his art the general excellence of his work is to be attributed, and that none that with certainty could be assigned to him has ever been found unworthy of his great reputation.

But Petitot was no less zealous as a Huguenot than

as an artist ; and on the Revocation of the Edict being announced he requested permission from the king, with whom he stood very high in favor, to retire to Geneva, his native place. The old man's request was refused, and that he might not secretly leave the country, a *lettre de cachet* consigned him and his wife to Fort l'Evêque. As soon as the Swiss Government heard of this arbitrary act, every effort was made to obtain Petitot's release ; but in vain. Confinement and anxiety soon told upon his health, and the result was fever. Louis, who had frequent occasion for Petitot's services, fearing the old painter might die, ordered his removal to a house. This was, in fact, but exchanging one prison for another—the house being inclosed within walls, beyond which he was not permitted to pass. It has been asserted that Bossuet was charged to visit the old man and his wife, in order to reason with them, to point out the errors of their faith, and to bring them into the fold of the faithful, but that his success was by no means satisfactory.

Like many others, however, Petitot was induced, for the purpose of obtaining his release, to sign a confession of faith. As soon as he was set at liberty, he and his wife escaped to Geneva, where, before the Conseil de Genève, they made a declaration that they had but yielded to the force of circumstances, and that Petitot had returned to his country to seek consolation there, and to obtain pardon from Heaven. These declarations, or letters, to the Conseil are still extant. They are said to be expressive of great anguish of mind, and to convey some idea of the misery then generally experienced by the Protestants of Paris.

Petitot's father was a skilful sculptor in wood. He apprenticed his son to a jeweller of Geneva, and Jean soon displayed so much ability in ornamental enamelling that he was advised to keep solely to that branch of his business. After some years of patient study, he and his friend Bordier—a fellow-workman of similar tastes and much skill—went to England, where some enamelled jewellery they had been commissioned to execute for the court so pleased the king that he mentioned it to Vandyke. The great painter desired to see it, and was much struck by its beauty and excellence. Several miniatures of the royal family, after portraits by Vandyke, were then executed by Petitot—the heads and hands being his work, the draperies and background Bordier's.

Théodore de Mayerne, a Swiss Protestant, was at that time the king's physician. He was an able experimental chemist, and had discovered some opaque colors for enamels which Petitot had long been anxious to obtain. By the aid of them he was enabled to bring his art to much greater perfection, by improving the flesh tints, and graduating the shadows of his paintings. After a time Charles I. knighted him, and gave him and Bordier an apartment at Whitehall. When the royal family fled to France Petitot accompanied them. His fame had preceded him, and numerous were the commissions he received for portraits of Louis XIV., as well as for private persons, and for the court. The charge for these exquisite miniatures was at first twenty louis ; but so great was the demand for them that it was increased very soon to forty. However, the louis d'or was then not worth more than ten francs.

There was no rivalry whatever between Petitot and

Bordier. They worked together for fifty years without ever having had a disagreement. Their partnership was founded on mutual attachment, and the love they both had for their art, though to Petitot was assigned the pre-eminence in it. In 1651, three years after their arrival in Paris, they divided equally the profits of their joint labor, which amounted to a million francs. Each then thought he was rich enough to take to himself a wife. Petitot married Margu  rite Cuper ; Bordier, her sister Madeleine. On the restoration of Charles II. he would have taken the painter with him to England, and promoted him to great honor—for Charles, in the straits he was often reduced to when in exile, had on several occasions been glad to avail himself of Petitot's hospitality. But being established in Paris he preferred to remain there, and Louis then conferred a pension upon him, and gave him and his partner an *atelier* in the galleries of the Louvre. There he continued to work for some years ; but, on the death of Bordier, advancing age and increasing wealth made it more convenient to him to establish an *atelier* in his own mansion.

Petitot had resided thirty-six years in Paris when the oppression and cruelty that resulted from the bigotry of Louis XIV. in revoking the Edict of Nantes, drove him, and so many thousands of its best citizens, from France. Petitot retired to Vevay, but continued to work. One of his most admired productions was executed there, after he had passed his eighty-second year—the portraits of the famous Jean Sobieski, King of Poland, and his queen. She is seated on a trophy, holding in her hand the portrait of her husband. The oil-paintings from which the

faces were copied were sent to Switzerland to him, and the price paid for this double work was a hundred louis d'or. The old painter was engaged on a portrait of his wife, when, in 1691, he was suddenly taken ill. He died the same day, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. He had had a family of seventeen sons and daughters. One only of the former became a painter. He established himself in London, and afterwards in Dublin. At the time of the Revocation, the survivors of Petitot's large family who were settled in France signed the confession of faith, and remained there. When their father fled to Geneva they presented a petition to the king, praying that he would pardon him ; to which Louis replied, that " he could forgive an old man's wish to be buried with his fathers." He was, however, aware that Petitot would have been well content to live on in peace with his family in France, and also to have been buried there.

Many of the great artist's priceless productions are said to have been destroyed for the sake of the comparatively valueless gold plaques upon which the greater part of them were painted. This, in some instances, was owing to the ignorance and cupidity of the persons into whose hands they sometimes fell ; in others, to the times of dire distress in France, when every piece of the precious metals, however small, was collected and carried to the mint ; and objects of art of inestimable value were sacrificed to the needs of the state.

Amongst so many exquisitely beautiful specimens of Petitot's skill, it would be difficult perhaps to select one to which could be assigned the honor, *par excellence*, of being his *chef-d'œuvre*. Yet it has been

considered that no known work of Petitot has surpassed in beauty and finish his portrait, after Vandyke, of the Countess of Southampton. It belongs to the Duke of Devonshire ; its date is 1642.

Petitot was for many years a member of the French Academy of Painting, to which he presented, on his election, a fine enamel portrait of Louis XIV., after that in oil by Le Brun. But on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes—as soon as it was known that Petitot was unwilling to abjure the Protestant faith—his name was erased, by royal command, from the list of Academicians.

CHAPTER LIV.

Marriage of Mdlle. de Nantes.—Death of the Grand Condé.—
Bossuet's Last Oration.—Madame de Caylus.—Lines Addressed
to Her.—The Marquis de la Fare.

It was also in 1685 that the king conferred on the Condé family the further mortifying honor of marrying his second illegitimate daughter, Mademoiselle de Nantes, a girl of twelve years, to Monsieur le Duc, grandson of the great Condé. Louis never really forgave the prince his conduct at the time of the Fronde, but delighted to find opportunities of vexing and humiliating him. This marriage, so repugnant to the family, was celebrated with extraordinary splendor. *Carrousel* at Versailles; fancy *fête* at Marly; the ladies drawing lots for a variety of magnificent jewels, until all were provided with a valuable present from the king. A brilliant *fête* was given in the fine gardens of the Château de Sceaux, and Madame de Montespan was permitted to share in the festivities in honor of her daughter's marriage. It was a sort of triumphal closing of her career, in the presence of her successful rival—for it was her last appearance at court. She retired with an immense income, increased by a pension of a thousand louis d'or per month—for her services, probably, to the state. She, however, did not seclude herself in a convent, but was content to wear secretly a sack-cloth chemise; with necklace, bracelets, and garters,

en suite, of rough horsehair, garnished with little sharp points of steel.

In the following year the Grand Condé died at Fontainebleau, whither he had hastened, alarmed for the safety of his grandson and heir, on hearing that the young duchess had taken the small-pox—the Prince de Conti, a few months before, having died of the same disease. The youthful bride and bridegroom recovered ; but Condé's strength was unequal to sustaining the shock he had received, and the fatigue of a hasty journey, which was great in those days ; and in a very short time after his arrival, this great prince, and hero, ended his chequered career.* Both Bossuet and Bourdaloue delivered funeral orations. That of Bossuet was his last. He was sixty years of age, and to give full effect to this kind of eloquence physical power was needed, with appropriate action, and the voice thoroughly under command. Perhaps he felt some slight falling off in them, his admirers saw none ; he, however, chose to retire from the pulpit with his reputation, as one of its greatest orators, undimmed ; and he is said on this occasion to have surpassed himself.

The king had an illness in 1686 which partly obliged him to renounce balls, plays, and *fêtes*, and thus gave him a greater inclination for the practices of piety. The court being less brilliant, its disorderly

* It was pretended that a man in full armor, resembling him, had been seen by a gentleman of the household but a few days before, standing at a window of the armory. This place, always kept locked, was searched ; no one was found. A servant confirmed his master's story, and it was told to the prince, who smiled incredulously, yet was really affected by it. Belief in such tales was in accordance with the superstitious spirit of the age.

pleasures were to come to an end, and give place to hypocritical devotion. "*La mode passe, et le courtisan est dévot,*" says La Bruyère. "It is but a change of vice. If the king were an atheist, the courtier, too, would be an atheist." If the Huguenots had been but as supple as the courtiers, how they would have gladdened the heart of their saintly king.

Madame de Maintenon was already beginning to feel the weight of those chains she had forged for herself, and to seek some relief from the monotony of her life. "Consideration," when attained, pressed heavily upon her. Imitating the king, she, too, would build, and St. Cyr was the result of *ennui*. Anxious also to save the souls of poor little heretics, she began with that of her niece, Mademoiselle de Murçay, who was converted by a promise of being taken every day to see the grand show of high mass in the king's chapel. At the age of fifteen she married her to the dissipated old Marquis de Caylus. It was while walking with this niece in the gardens of Versailles, some years after she became the wife of Louis XIV., that Madame de Maintenon, replying to Madame de Caylus' remark that the carp brought to the ponds of Versailles soon languished and died, said, with a deep sigh, "*Elles sont comme moi ; elles regrettent leur bourbe !*"—and well, indeed, she might regret it ; for the last thirty years of her life were but as one long penance.

Madame de Caylus was a very lively and rather wild young matron—her frequent *escapades* greatly ruffling the serenity of the staid Madame de Maintenon. She was exceedingly pretty—one of the few *belles* whose portraits seem to justify their reputation for beauty, piquancy, and *esprit*. The old Marquis

de la Fare—the same who was the lover of Madame de la Sablière, and whose devotion to *bassette* she regarded as so unpardonable an infidelity, that chiefly on account of it she gave up the world in disgust—addressed the following lines to Madame de Caylus.

“ M’abandonnant un jour à la tristesse,
Sans espérance, et même sans désirs,
Je regrettais les sensibles plaisirs
Dont la douceur enchantait ma jeunesse.
Sont-ils perdus, disais-je, sans retour ?
Et n’est-il pas cruel, Amour !
Toi que j’ai fait, dès mon enfance,
Le maître de mes plus beaux jours,
D’en laisser terminer le cours
A l’ennuyeuse indifférence ?
Alors j’aperçus dans les airs
L’enfant maître de l’univers,
Qui, plein d’une joie inhumaine,
Me dit, en souriant : Tircis, ne te plains plus,
Je vais mettre fin à ta peine ;
Je te promets un regard de Caylus.”

La Fare was distinguished above the crowd of minor poets of his day, and these verses have been ranked amongst the prettiest of his productions. They were written after Madame de la Sablière had renounced her faithless swain.

CHAPTER LV.

Reappearance of Lauzun.—James II.—Melancholy Mirth.—Distress in France.—Decline of Les Belles Lettres.—Madame de Lambert.—Death of Mdlle. de Scudéry.—Ninon de Lenclos.—Voltaire.—Death of Ninon.—1715.

IN 1689 Lauzun reappeared in France, accompanying Maria Modena, James II.'s queen, in her flight with the infant prince from England. James himself soon followed. Louis XIV. was royally munificent in his hospitality to his cousin James and his queen. It added another to the already heavy burdens of France. But what of that, if it added, or was supposed to add, to the glory of the king. Except with the king, James found little favor at the French court. And bigot though he was, pope, cardinals, bishops, and even the Jesuit priests whom he so courted, alike ridiculed and contemned him. "The courtiers," says Madame de La Fayette, "the more they saw of King James, the less they pitied him for the loss of his kingdom." Their unfavorable opinion had, however, no better foundation than his inability to give in pure French a flowing narration of his troubles; and the want of *distinction* in his manners; the undue length of his sword, which he carried ungracefully; trailing it after him; and the size of his hat, that covered not only his head, but his eyes. They forgot that the poor man, in his haste to get safe away with his head, might have left his own hat behind him, and have snatched up any other that

fell in his way. He had a large appetite, too, and "ate as heartily, it appears, as if no William of Orange existed." On the whole, it may be surmised that James made but a poor figure in comparison with the courtly and magnificent Louis.

A little more gaiety was introduced into the then severely limited routine of court pleasures. The only plays tolerated being the "*petites pièces pieuses*" of Duché and Racine, performed by the demoiselles de St. Cyr. "Esther," otherwise Madame de Maintenon, was played for the amusement of James and Maria. There was the chase in the morning, billiards in the evening; also, *un petit opéra* at Trianon, performed by the court; and at Marly a little gambling, at the new game of "*portiques*." It was carnival-time, but the masked balls were spiritless, and for other reasons than court piety. They began only at midnight, and before two the melancholy maskers had dispersed. Led on by Louvois, who died suddenly in 1691, the king had brought the nation to the brink of ruin, and murmuring and misery were general.

Louis was particularly anxious that James should see and admire his fine gardens and water-works of Marly and Versailles, which had cost thirty thousand men their lives, and still were unfinished. The numerous gardeners employed in keeping up the grounds had famine visible in their hollow eyes and wasted features. There was not a *sou* in the state's coffers to pay them, and provisions were scarce, for the lands lay untilled for want of laborers.

Lauzun accompanied James on his expedition to Ireland. On their return, at the request of James, Louis received Lauzun again into favor, and gave

him the title of duke. James created this vainglorious swaggerer a Knight of the Garter, and presented him with the insignia of the order that had belonged to Charles I. Lauzun was once more lodged at Versailles with the court. Mademoiselle protested vehemently against it; but the miseries of the country were too absorbing to allow of attention being given to her complaints. Mademoiselle died in 1693, and Lauzun duly mourned for her in black, relieved with blue and white—silver and gold being prohibited on account of the national distress. A few years after, he married Mademoiselle de Lorges, a younger sister of the young Duchess de Saint Simon. Being a second time left a widower, he retired to the convent of Les petits Augustins, in Paris, and died in the odor of sanctity at the patriarchal age of ninety-one.

In 1695 the magistrates of Paris were excused by the king from presenting him with their accustomed New Year's offerings. The *fêtes* of the *jour du roi* were suppressed, and the plays and masquerades of the carnival. The misery of France seemed complete as the century drew towards its close. Famine, pestilence, and war had exhausted the resources of the country. Louis had neither money nor men. The people were dying of hunger, and refused to serve a king whose highest aim was to gratify his own ambition.

Of the last fifteen years of the reign of Louis XIV., the page of history tells a sorrowful tale. It was a period unfavorable also to *les belles lettres*, and to the progress of science and art. Celebrated women and men, distinguished for learning, genius, and eloquence, gradually died off, but left no successors.

"*La nature semblait se réposer,*" says Voltaire. Lulli and his *collaborateur* Quinault died within a year of each other—1687 and 1688. Le Grand Corneille, Racine, Molière, La Bruyère, Duché, Péllisson, and La Fontaine were dead. Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Mascaron died in the same year—1701. Mademoiselle, Mesdames de La Fayette, de Sablé, Des Houlières, and de Sévigné all within three years—1693 to 1696. And many other distinguished men and women who shed lustre on the reign of Louis XIV. disappeared from the stage of life at about the same time.

The traditions of the famous Hôtel de Rambouillet, "*le berceau de la société polie,*" yet survived at the hôtel of the Marquise de Lambert—that splendid hôtel in the Ile St. Louis, designed by the architect Levau, decorated and painted by Lesueur and Le Brun, and which has been in modern times restored by Prince Czartoriski. Madame de Lambert, whose mother, the Marquise de Courcelles, married as her second husband the famous *bel-esprit*, Bachaumont—who christened the Fronde—not only received a distinguished circle of the *litterati* and the *beau monde*, but was herself a writer. She published a collection of "Portraits;" "Une traité sur l'amitié;" a romance, "La femme hermite;" and "Avis d'une mère à son fils, et d'une mère à sa fille:" the last being her most esteemed work. The Duchess du Maine, who, ugly and deformed, received complimentary verses on her great beauty when she was between sixty and seventy years of age, was not celebrated as the patroness of those *beaux esprits* Lamothe, St. Aulaire, Fontenelle, Chaulieu, and others, until after the death of her husband in 1736.

But in 1700 Mademoiselle de Scudéry still lived.

She was ninety-three, and had given up her "Saturdays" only five years before. The friends of her early days had of course passed away, but she had lived so long that their successors had become old friends, and a large circle still constantly visited her—the French being far less neglectful of the ties of relationship and friendship than are the English. She continued to write up to the age of eighty-five, and is said to have regretted that so much of her early life had been spent in writing romances. She became deaf and feeble, but her mind remained perfectly clear and vigorous. Her friends compared her to a sibyl to whom the power of eloquent speech alone remained. On the morning of the 2d of June, 1701, she rose early, as was still her custom. Soon after she was seized with a sudden weakness, and said to her servant : "*Bettine, je sens qu'il faut mourir.*" Her confessor and her medical attendant were sent for, but she had breathed her last before they arrived.

Two churches claimed the right to bury her—that of the "Hôpital des enfants rouges," where she had expressed a wish to be buried, and that of "St. Nicolas-des-champs," the parish in which she had resided for fifty years. Cardinal de Noailles decided in favor of the latter, and there, on the evening of the 3d of June, 1701, she was interred. No monument to her memory, no epitaph or inscription now exists in that church. She died in straitened circumstances, her brother having spent nearly all the large profits derived from her novels, and the pensions conferred on her being rarely paid.

Another celebrity of the seventeenth century still survived—Mademoiselle Ninon de Lenclos—charming, it is said, to the last. In 1700 she was eighty-

four, and still held her weekly *réunions* in the same house in the Rue des Tournelles. The *beau monde* of both sexes, men of letters and men of science, and those who aspired to be thought *beaux esprits*—though *esprit* had gone out of fashion, because, as with many other good things in those times of general scarcity, there was a dearth of it—assembled at five o'clock in a well-warmed apartment she called her *salle d'hiver*. On its walls hung portraits of her friends, painted by the first artists of the day. The company retired at nine, for though not in ill health, she was delicate and fragile, unable to bear the fatigue of much conversation, and needed quiet and repose. In summer she used the *Psyche salon*, which was sunny, and had a pleasant view of the boulevards, and her hours were a little later. Jean de la Chapelle, then of her society, wrote :

" Il ne faut pas qu'on s'étonne,
Si souvent elle raisonne,
De la sublime vertu,
Dont Platon fut revêtu.
Car, à bien compter son âge,
Elle peut avoir vécu
Avec ce grand personnage."

Madame de Maintenon is said never to have lost her interest in this friend of her less prosperous, but happier, days, and to have been desirous of affording the king the pleasure of seeing and conversing with the aged enchantress. She desired, too, that she should become less of a philosopher and more of a devotee. But her overtures were not met by Ninon as she had hoped they would be. Mademoiselle de Lenclos was not disposed to visit Versailles even to amuse the great Louis. She thanked her friend for

her kind intentions, but made her comprehend that for her it was too late to begin to learn "*l'art de dissimuler et de se contraindre*."

In the last year of her life some verses that Arouet (Voltaire), then a mere child, had written on her ninetieth birthday—October 17, 1706—were shown to her by the Abbé Chateauneuf. Ninon desired to see the youthful poet, and her friend took him to visit her. His conversation, and intelligent replies to the questions she put to him, pleased her greatly, and she advised him to be diligent in acquiring learning, also to continue to write poetry. A few weeks afterwards she died—very calmly, and from sheer exhaustion of nature. Unable to sleep, on the last night of her life, she is said to have composed the following lines, which were taken down by the friends who attended her death-bed :

" Q'un vain espoir ne vienne point s'offrir
Qui puisse ébranler mon courage,
Je suis en age de mourir,
Que ferais je ici davantage ?"

In her will she left young Arouet a thousand livres, to purchase books for his studies.

Of literary women of any distinction, there remained at the close of the century only Madame Dacier, Madame de Lambert, and Madame de Maintenon—whose letters, in a literary point of view, far surpass those of Madame de Sévigné ; she also wrote a work for the use of St. Cyr. Of distinguished men, Fénelon, Fléchier, and Boileau were then living, but died before the king. Massillon, Fleury, Lamothe, Jean Baptiste Rousseau, and Fontenelle—who reached the age of one hundred—with many others

of lesser note of the seventeenth century, survived far into the eighteenth.

In 1715 the long reign of Louis XIV. ended. "An end very different from its beginning. He received his kingdom powerful and preponderating abroad, tranquil and contented at home ; he left it weakened, humiliated, discontented, impoverished, and already filled with the seeds of the Revolution." *

* Roederer—"Mémoires pour servir," etc.

CHAPTER LVI.

Close of the Reign of Louis XIV.—Paris in 1715.—Hôtels of the Noblesse. — Coach-building. — Misery and Famine. — Italian Opera Prohibited.—Grand Altar of Notre Dame.—Faubourg St. Germain, 1690.—Death of the Grand Monarque.

PARIS at the close of the reign of Louis XIV., though for upwards of thirty years the court had forsaken it as a residence, and the Louvre and the Tuileries were greatly in need of repair, was a much finer city than when, in 1661, the king took the reins of government in hand. Its streets were still ill-paved and ill-lighted ; but for more than a hundred years after the same might be said of them. A stream of black mud ran down their centre, and, when any vehicle passed, foot passengers had to beat a hasty retreat though any open doorway they could find, if they would avoid a mud shower-bath or escape being crushed against the walls of the houses ; for foot-pavements there were none, and the streets generally were so narrow that there was not space to allow of them. But Paris now extended far beyond its ancient limits, and since the destruction of the old ramparts and bastions, the faubourgs had become united by new buildings to the city. A new boulevard had been planted on either side of the river, and another from the Porte St. Antoine to the Porte St. Honoré ; so, notwithstanding that the streets in the centre of the city were miserably dirty, there were fine open walks around it. That part lying between the

Rue Montmartre and the Cité de Notre Dame had been partially cleared of its network of dilapidated old tenements, and new streets with fine hôtels had taken its place. In every new street opened during the reign of Louis XIV., there was placed, in some part of it, a bust of the monarch in a full court wig.

Monsieur had enlarged the Palais Royal. The Rue Colbert, crossing the Rues Vivienne and De Richelieu, was finished. "Le Sieur de Lulli"—who became a rich man before he died, and "drew a large revenue from his operas and a vast concourse of people to his music"—had a very fine hôtel in the Rue Vivienne.* The Hôtel de Louvois was remarkable for its "marvellously wrought" locks, which were kept so bright that they had the appearance of silver; and several other of the hôtels of the *noblesse* had exceedingly curious locks. The Rue du Grand Chantier was full of handsome houses. Many of them were built by Mansard, and contained fine specimens of his work, in the elaborate carvings of the broad and lofty grand staircases.

Splendidly furnished, too, were most of these princely dwellings. But the silver and gold—in many instances priceless works of art, which once abounded in them—had been carried to the mint, when, to supply funds for Louis' wars, private individuals were stripped of their valuables. Still, rich tapestries adorned the walls, and the hangings of the massive state beds were of the richest satins, heavily embroidered—marvellous specimens of needlework, as well as of patience and skill. But with all this display, this taste and grandeur, little regard was

* Lulli's tomb and bronze bust are in the church of Notre Dame des Victoires.

given to cleanliness in these vast hôtels, or even in the royal palaces ; and of comfort there may be said to have been none. Crowds of lackeys and pages infested them, but for ornament rather than use ; their chief duty being to display the rich liveries of the *grand seigneur* or *grande dame* to whose household they were attached.

Coach-building made considerable progress in the reign of Louis XIV. The royal carriages were splendid.* Those of the nobility and the *beau monde*, generally, though rather too large, were not only elegant, but comfortable and well slung, and all were furnished with glass windows and sun-blinds. As many as eight hundred carriages might be seen on the fashionable drive of the Cours de la Reine on a fine day in the Paris season.

The Pont Royal, the Royal Observatory, designed by Perrault, and the Hôtel des Invalides, were, as before mentioned, built by Louis XIV. The Place des Victoires was constructed in 1685 by that most servile of courtiers, the Maréchal de Feuillade, who gave 80,000 livres for the ground—the site of the Hôtel de la Ferte Senneterre and its gardens—in order to place there the statue of the king. The *Place* was lighted at each corner by four lanterns, surmounting a triangular column. On the pedestals were fulsome inscriptions in honor of Louis XIV.

In 1691 several old houses were cleared away. The building of the Rue de la Monnaie was continued,

* In the superb collection of ancient royal carriages belonging to the King of Portugal, in Lisbon, there is a magnificent carriage presented by Louis XIV. to Don Juan V., on his marriage. It is finely carved ; the panels were painted by Jouvenot. On one of them is a portrait of Louis, said to be an excellent likeness.

and the Rue du Roule was opened. But famine and poverty prevented many desirable changes from being carried out, and caused many intended embellishments in different parts of the city to be given up. Paris was full of indigent people, who had sought refuge there from the misery and distress of the provinces. Those who could labor were employed in the king's works ; those who were either unable or unwilling to do so, if they begged, were sent to Bicêtre, and when released, menaced with the galleys if they repeated the offence. There was occasionally a distribution of bread to these starving creatures. But so severe and so stringently executed were the regulations respecting them, that the greater part fled from the evils that beset them, and perished by hundreds from hunger and disease.

In 1697, the king becoming more and more devout, the Italian comedians were driven from Paris. They had possession of the Théâtre de Bourgogne, and hitherto had been favored with the royal patronage. But now it was withdrawn, and they were ordered to give up the theatre to the lieutenant of the police, who put seals on the doors. The *troupe* dispersed, and appeared no more in Paris until 1716, when the Regent Orleans again allowed them the use of the Théâtre de Bourgogne.

The Place Louis le Grand—now Place Vendôme—was begun in 1699. The old Hôtel de Vendôme stood there, and blocked up and disfigured the entrance to Paris on the side of the Rue St. Honoré, preventing also any communication with the Rue Neuve St. Honoré and the Rue des-Petits-Champs. The king found money to buy this hôtel and the neighboring convent of Les Capucines. The

convent was rebuilt ; the new *Place* was planned ; the surrounding buildings being intended to receive the “*Bibliothèque du roi.*” But when partly erected the king disapproved of the plan. It was a perfect square ; he preferred that its corners should be cut off. The whole was therefore taken down, and the materials offered to the municipality of Paris to build a barracks for the second company of Mousquetaires, if the city would undertake to re-erect the *Place*. The offer was accepted, and the Place Vendôme built in its present form. An equestrian statue of Louis XIV. was placed in the centre, but the surrounding houses were not entirely completed until after the king's death. This *Place* was one of the great improvements of the city.

In the same year the king resolved to accomplish his father's vow, made in February, 1638, to rebuild the grand altar of the cathedral of Notre Dame, in commemoration of the placing of his kingdom under the special protection of the Virgin. It was finished only the year before the king's death, the work having been for some time suspended because of the national misfortunes and reverses. This grand monument was destroyed in 1793, and “*sur les pompeux débris de l'antique imposture*” was erected a symbolical mountain, on which was elevated the statue of the GODDESS OF REASON ! In 1803 the present altar was reconstructed.

In 1703 the city and its faubourgs were divided into twenty “quartiers.” The wall enclosing the university was taken down, and the moat filled up. The four gates that separated the Faubourg St. Germain from the rest of Paris were removed, and the Quartier

St. Germain, as the faubourg was thenceforth called, was no longer a distinct portion of the city. It was, however, the pleasantest and healthiest part of it. Its hôtels, some of the finest in Paris, were surrounded by extensive gardens and pleasure grounds. An old "Englished Guide to Paris," date 1690, says : "This faubourg may be compared with some great towns in Europe which are much talked of, according to the opinion of strangers themselves, to whom the dwellings here appear so pleasing that they prefer this part of town to all the rest of Paris. And they have great reason for so doing, since all things abound here."

The only theatre where French plays were performed was in the Rue de Seine. But the *troupe* seems to have been an inferior one ; neither the tragedies of Corneille and Racine nor the comedies of Molière were given, but pieces of little merit by obscure writers of the day. The king had set his face against the poor players, and the theatre was therefore but little patronized by the *beau monde*.

In 1715 the population of Paris, including the faubourgs, amounted to four hundred and eighty thousand souls. The city was improved, no doubt, but there was not the same life and activity in it as in the good old times before the Fronde. The spirit of independence was nearly crushed out of the people ; they were submissive and resigned under the heavy calamities which the king's extravagance and vain ambition had brought on them. A little feverish agitation was sometimes apparent, but the fear of the Bastille and the Place de la Grève soon quelled it.

The news of the king's death was received almost

with indifference by the populace. Perhaps it excited some slight emotion in the ranks of the *bourgeoisie*. But, on the whole, the feeling of the people was one of subdued joy ; and throughout society there was a sensation of relief when it became generally known that THE GRAND MONARQUE WAS DEAD.

THE END.

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